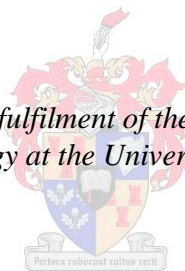


# **GIVE US A KING TO GOVERN US: AN IDEOLOGICAL READING OF 1 SAMUEL 8-12**

by

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## **Declaration**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to explore “who is saying what to whom for what purpose” in the text of 1 Samuel 8-12 through an analysis of the manifestations of ideology in this text. The emphasis of this thesis lies in the application of multiple methodologies in biblical interpretation with a view to (a) reconstructing the material and ideological conditions under which the biblical text was produced in order to determine which group produced the text and whose socioeconomic interests it served; and (b) investigating how these conditions are encoded in reproducing a particular ideology in order to determine how the texts incorporated the particular ideologies or interests of the time.

The present research, for this reason, combines an extrinsic and an intrinsic analysis to read the world of 1 Samuel. The extrinsic analysis makes use of a social-historical and a social scientific approach to explore the particular circumstances. It indicates that the biblical writing should be regarded as conscious writing which aims to interpret historical incidents and construct specific ideologies. 1 Samuel 8-12 might therefore have been constructed by exilic groups to provide reasons for their difficult past. The intrinsic analysis makes use of narrative criticism, especially the theory of conflict plot, to do an in-depth investigation of the rhetoric of 1 Samuel 8-12. This analysis indicates that these chapters highlight the ambivalence of the monarchy, although the surface structure might tell a different story. The findings of the research have led to the conclusion that 1 Samuel 8-12 appears to present no clear position with regard to the future of the monarchy.

## OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie studie is om vas te stel “wie sê wat vir wie, en met watter doel” in die teks van 1 Samuel 8-12. Dit word gedoen deur ‘n analise te maak van hoe ideologie in hierdie teks manifesteer. Die klem van hierdie studie lê in die toepassing van verskillende metodologieë van bybelinterpretasie ten einde (a) die materiaal en ideologiese omstandighede waarin die bybelteks geproduseer is, te rekonstrueer, met die oog daarop om vas te stel wie die teks geproduseer het, en wie se belange daardeur gedien word; en (b) te ondersoek hoe hierdie omstandighede enkodeer is in die formulering van ‘n spesifieke ideologie, ten einde te bepaal hoe die teks die betrokke ideologieë of belange van die tyd geïnkorporeer het.

Om hierdie rede kombineer die studie ‘n ekstrensieke en ‘n intrinsieke analise om die wêreld van 1 Samuel te lees. Die ekstrensieke analise gebruik ‘n sosio-historiese en sosiaal-wetenskaplike benadering om die betrokke omstandighede na te vors. Hierdie benadering dui aan dat die bybelteks beskou kan word as ‘n bewuste geskrif wat ten doel het om sekere historiese gebeure te interpreteer en om spesifieke ideologieë te konstrueer. 1 Samuel 8-12 is daarom moontlik gekonstrueer deur eksiliese groepe om verklarings vir hul moeilike verlede te gee. Die intrinsieke analise maak gebruik van narratiewe kritiek, veral die teorie van konflikplot, om ‘n in-diepte studie te maak van die retoriek van 1 Samuel 8-12. Hierdie analise toon dat die betrokke hoofstukke die ambivalensie van die koningskap beklemtoon, hoewel die oppervlaktestruktuur moontlik ‘n ander verhaal vertel. Die bevindings van hierdie navorsing lei dan tot die konklusie dat 1 Samuel 8-12 skynbaar geen duidelike posisie met betrekking tot die toekoms van die koningskap aanbied nie.

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**Soli Deo Gloria!**

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background Information

The dilemma of 1 Samuel 8-12 has already emerged for a long time.<sup>1</sup> The primary features giving rise to the debates are (a) the two quite opposing views of the monarchy and (b) the seemingly tautological and conflicting plot which describes the procedure of elevating Saul to the position of king. In Lyle Eslinger's terminology, the first difficult knot is "a problem of point of view," and the second is "a comparatively simple matter of perceived redundancy and contradiction."<sup>2</sup> In this case, the studied history of 1 Samuel 8-12 might be roughly classified into two categories: diachronic reading and synchronic reading.

#### 1.1.1 Diachronic Reading

Generally, Julius Wellhausen has been regarded as the first scholar who gave prominence to the account in 1 Samuel 8-12, trying to settle its problems by means of

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<sup>1</sup> In 1983, Eslinger published a paper in which he described the five chapters, 1 Samuel 8-12, as a showcase to exhibit research materials for over 200 years. In the same year, Andrew D. H. Mayes also presented the same chapters as a favorite hunting ground for source critics. Lyle Eslinger, "Viewpoints and Point of View in 1 Samuel 8-12," in *JSOT* (1983): 61; Andrew David Hastings Mayes, *The Story of Israel between Settlement and Exile: A Redactional Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (London: SCM, 1983), 9.

<sup>2</sup> Eslinger, "Viewpoints and Point of View in 1 Samuel 8-12," 62.

a diachronic reading.<sup>3</sup> He divided 1 Samuel 8-12 into at least two versions: 9.1-10.16; 11.1-11; 15 as pro-monarchic in sentiment, and 7-8; 10.17-27; 12 as anti-monarchic in sentiment. The pro-monarchical sentiments should be placed in the pre-exilic period, whereas the anti-monarchical sentiments should be associated with the exilic or post-exilic period since it was incredible to locate such sentiments in Judah. That is to say, pro-monarchical sentiments were earlier than anti-monarchical sentiments, located in the pre-exilic period. Wellhausen's insight stimulated related research and gradually became a fundamental starting-point for succeeding diachronic research. Nevertheless, his perspectives on redaction and dating have been criticized by subsequent critics on a number of grounds.

T. Ishida, for example, accepted Wellhausen's important distinction between the pro-monarchical in sentiment and the anti-monarchical in sentiment, but argued that the tribes of ancient Israel resisted the institution of monarchy as a result of those related traditions shaped in the pre-monarchical period.<sup>4</sup> This inference led him to believe that the opposition to the monarchy had to be overcome at the time of Saul's election, and even the anti-monarchical sentiments had been silenced by the time of David and Solomon and was never resumed.<sup>5</sup> Stated differently, the anti-monarchical sentiment should have disappeared before the monarchy, namely the time of Judges. For this reason, in terms of Ishida's research, it appears to be the fact that parts of 1 Samuel 8-12 should be relocated in the early monarchy or the time of Judges.

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<sup>3</sup> Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1973), 249-56.

<sup>4</sup> Although he agreed with Wellhausen's distinction between the pro-monarchical sentiments and of the anti-monarchical sentiments, he refused to press these texts into a chronological or geographical order. In fact, this kind of attitude is quite similar to the position of a synchronic reading. T. Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel: A Study on the Formation and Development of Royal-Dynastic Ideology* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1977), 30.

<sup>5</sup> Similarly, V. Philips Long claimed that Wellhausen's judgment on the date for anti-monarchical sentiment can no longer be maintained. F. Crusemann has also indicated that "the ideological struggle they reflect had been in process since the time of Gideon and Saul." Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel*, 183. V. Philips Long, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul: A Case for Literary and Theological Coherence* (Atlanta: SBL, 1989), 180.

However, there are still several scholars who prefer to support a later version due to the vigorous development of Deuteronomistic History, such as the so-called Göttingen school scholars.

In the view of the Göttingen school scholars, the tension between the partisans and opponents of the monarchy in 1 Samuel 8-12 should be regarded as a significant debate within the Deuteronomistic History.<sup>6</sup> Walter Dietrich, a member of the Göttingen school, deemed that the pro-monarchical sentiments were taken over and reworked by the exilic “DtrH,” who had a positive attitude towards the monarchy. On the other hand, the older accounts were ascribed to an exilic or early postexilic “DtrN,” who held a negative attitude towards the monarchy.<sup>7</sup> In other words, according to the perspectives of the Göttingen school scholars, not only the later Deuteronomistic version could be an option, but the negative attitude could also be moved to the exilic or early postexilic period. As a matter of fact, the exilic date has already been supported by several biblical scholars, such as Steve L. McKenzie.

In his article titled: “The Trouble with Kingship” McKenzie proposed a consistent reading based on the later Deuteronomistic version; nevertheless, he maintains an idea of a single, exilic, Deuteronomistic author.<sup>8</sup> As a matter of fact, the

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<sup>6</sup> Römer and De Pury, “Deuteronomistic Historiography,” in *Israel Constructs its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research*, ed. A. de Pury, T. Römer and J. D. Macchi (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 124.

<sup>7</sup> For Dietrich, the pro-monarchical sentiments are in 8.1-5, 22b; 9.1-10, 16; 10.17, 18a, 20-27; 11, while the anti-monarchical sentiments are in 8.6-22a; 10.8ab-19; 12. In fact, it is Timo Veijola, another member of the Göttingen school, who transfers the tension to the very interior of the Deuteronomistic school, by applying the new model of three successive Deuteronomistic redactions to the analysis. He suggested that the accounts in 1 Samuel 9-10 which belonged to DtrH still regarded the monarchy positively, whereas DtrP (cf. 2 Samuel 12) took a critical stance towards the Davidic dynasty. Finally, DtrN tried to whitewash the founders of the Judean dynasty, David and Solomon while he also rejecting the monarchical institution as such (cf. 1 Samuel 8.6-22; 1 Kings 1.35-37; 2.3, 4). Walter Dietrich, “History and Law: Deuteronomistic Historiography and Deuteronomic Law Exemplified in the Passage from the Period of the Judges to the Monarchical Period,” in *Israel Constructs its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research*, ed. A. de Pury, T. Römer and J. D. Macchi (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 315-342. Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 30.

<sup>8</sup> Steve L. McKenzie, “The Trouble with Kingship,” in *Israel Constructs its History: Deuteronomistic*

position of a single exilic Deuteronomistic author had already been put forward by Noth.<sup>9</sup> Noth saw 1 Samuel 8-12 as a unified composition including several materials which had not previously been redacted together. Despite the various materials which might be dated from the pre-monarchic period, the attention should be paid to the final editing contributed by the single exilic Deuteronomistic author, since an ancient author had lots of freedom to arrange his materials for expressing some specific perspectives. Although McKenzie agreed with Noth's theory of a single exilic Deuteronomistic author, he indicated that his "understanding of these chapters as a whole as anti-monarchical does not take stock of the complexity of the statements about this issue in the Dtr passages."<sup>10</sup> McKenzie also emphasized the Dtr's compositional techniques for the entire History in order to question Noth's conclusion that the Dtr's intervention in these chapters was atypical.

Taken as a whole, McKenzie argued for "a setting of the Deuteronomistic historian in Mizpah shortly after 587/586 B.C.E, which might explain the presence in the Deuteronomistic History of texts expressing an ongoing interest in the Davidic dynasty, and Dtr's attitude toward kingship in these chapters can be described as ambiguous or ambivalent at worst."<sup>11</sup> It is noteworthy that although the assumption of twofold or multiple redactions was influential for the analysis of 1 Samuel 8-12, McKenzie's discussion was also persuasive, establishing a significant new horizon for academic research.

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*Historiography in Recent Research*, ed. A. de Pury, T. Römer and J. D. Macchi (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 286-314.

<sup>9</sup> Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1981).

<sup>10</sup> McKenzie suggests that a better approach is to focus first on the literary shape of the chapter and then to try to understand its ideology on its own terms if ideology is a poor criterion for source division, and these redactional distinctions lack strong literary support. McKenzie, "The Trouble with Kingship," 286.

<sup>11</sup> McKenzie, "The Trouble with Kingship," 307.

### 1.1.2 Synchronic Reading

Different from the viewpoint of diachronic reading, Artur Weiser saw the complicated diversity of sentiments as a conglomeration of literary compilations which incorporated traditions from diverse times and places. He said, “in view of the diversity of motives and points of view in the passages under discussion we must on the contrary take into account a many-stranded process of utilizing and shaping the traditions which developed over a long period and set at different points and different times.”<sup>12</sup> That is, each contrasting sentiment reflects a unique socio-historical compositional setting. He argued that neither of Wellhausen’s literary strands, pro or anti-monarchic, exhibited a coherent point of view. Rather, the contrary perspectives expressed in 1 Samuel 8-12 might stem from a process of literary compilation where traditions were not so much intermingled with each other as strung after each other, partly on a very loose thread.<sup>13</sup> In the simplest terms, synchronic reading mainly utilizes a fresh reading strategy which views the contrasting sentiments as literary compilations edited into an esthetic manifestation. For this reason, synchronic reading requires a careful reading of the narrative construction

McCarthy, for instance, in his form-critical study of 1 Samuel 8-12, emphasized the importance of the internal articulation of the unit. He discerned the unit in a synchronic way and asked the reader to pay attention to the explicit narrative construction of the unit. McCarthy’s analysis may be briefly summarized as follows:<sup>14</sup>

B (—) 8:4-22                      Report of an assembly: People request a king

A (+) 9:1-10:16                      Story: the secret anointing of Saul

<sup>12</sup> Artur Weiser, *The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development*, trans. D.M. Barton (New York: Association, 1961), 161.

<sup>13</sup> Weiser, *The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development*, 162.

<sup>14</sup> D. J. McCarthy, “The Inauguration of Monarchy in Israel: A Form-Critical Study of 1 Samuel 8-12.” *Int* 27 (1973), 403.

B (–) 10:17-27      Report of an assembly: public presentation

A (+) 11:1-13          Story: Saul's first exploit

B (–) 11:14-12:25      Report of an assembly: Samuel's speech

According to his analysis, the anti-monarchical sentiments were concentrated in the reports of an assembly, whereas the pro-monarchical sentiments were tended to be expressed by the stories. He claimed that, based on genre analysis, kingship as a problem was the basic theme of the section, and the reader was not allowed to lose sight of this even in the so-called pro-monarchical units. In light of this kind of reading strategy, it is quite clear that dating or editing is by no means the only solution to the problems of contrary points of view; genre and literary analysis provide an alternative path.

In his book titled "*Irony in the Old Testament*," Edwin M. Good took notice of a specific genre, "tragedy," and thereby explored 1 Samuel 8-12 by means of a literary feature, "irony."<sup>15</sup> He claimed, "I am not particularly concerned that the narratives betray the existence, in the eleventh century or late, of more than one view of the nature of kingship. I am not particularly concerned about the apparent multiplicity of sources, the analysis of which has occupied a great deal of attention."<sup>16</sup> In other words, he attempted to transfer the reading focus from the horizon behind the text to the horizon within the text, that is, the meaning is conveyed by the text itself, though he does not reject the former approach. For example, the redundancy and contradictive problem, which was previously viewed as a redaction issue, might now

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<sup>15</sup> Good considers that, in a sense, the author has told the story of a man not fitted for a job that should not have been established. Edwin M. Good, *Irony in the Old Testament* (Sheffield: The Almond, 1965), 59, 66. Other research utilized tragedy as approach: J. Chery Exum, *Tragedy and Biblical Narrative: Arrows of the Almighty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992). Sarah Nicholson, *Three Faces of Saul: An Intertextual Approach to Biblical Tragedy* (Sheffield: JSOP, 2002).

<sup>16</sup> Attention is paid to the view of the narrator or final editor. For Good, their views are the material of investigation. Good, *Irony in the Old Testament*, 58-9.

be regarded as a particular literary skill now. On the basis of this literary angle, therefore, Good proposed the theme of 1 Samuel 8-12 as the theological ambiguity of the kingship's establishment, since the author doubted whether it was appropriate to establish the kingship.<sup>17</sup> The author, from an outside perspective, had already presented Saul's failure as a tragic and ambiguous failure. In that case, everything in 1 Samuel 8-12 points up the ambiguity of the kingship, even when the ostensible mood is one of approbation of kingship.

Similarly, Lyle Eslinger's "Viewpoints and Point of View in 1 Sam 8-12" is also a significant contribution to the debate of narrative perspective. In this essential article, Eslinger utilized the insights of comparative literary theory to reassess the validity of the pro-monarchical and anti-monarchical criteria.<sup>18</sup> He focused on the perspective and inquired into not only what is being opposed but also whose viewpoint is being expressed and in what context. It turned out that neither Samuel nor Yahweh showed anti-monarchical sentiments in an absolute sense. Rather, what Yahweh and Samuel were critical of was the anti-monarchical sentiment they heard in Israel's request for a king "like the nations." On the other hand, the omniscient narrator, who stood outside the narrated events and served as a guide to the reader who also stood outside, maintained his steadfast neutrality towards the subject of monarchy.

Recently, many critics using terminology such as biblical narrative, art, or poetics are associated with the synchronic reading, such as Meir Sternberg,<sup>19</sup> Robert

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<sup>17</sup> As a tragic narrative, Good argued that this episode begins the tale of the kingship, incorporating the first mention of a king in the Deuteronomistic History, and it immediately sets the entire kingship tradition in the light of apostasy. Good, *Irony in the Old Testament*, 60.

<sup>18</sup> Eslinger did not avoid the diachronic dilemma which bothered many scholars but managed to overcome the gap between historical criticism and literary criticism by means of the careful analysis of perspective, mode, and character. Eslinger, "Viewpoints and Point of View in 1 Sam 8-12," 66-8.

<sup>19</sup> Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1987).

Alter,<sup>20</sup> Shimon Bar-Efrat,<sup>21</sup> and Adele Berlin.<sup>22</sup> They are among the most prominent critics who advance this perspective. Moreover, there are also many related theories which assist and enrich biblical literary research, such as the theoretics proposed by Seymour Chatman,<sup>23</sup> Wayne Booth,<sup>24</sup> Gerard Genette,<sup>25</sup> and Boris Uspensky.<sup>26</sup> The principal point of departure for these methods is the insistence on the presence of meaning in the received text with no appeal to sources in interpretation.<sup>27</sup> Their efforts have provided a crucial impetus to settle understanding of the conflicts and contradictions in the text, such as in 1 Samuel 8-12. This is not to say, however, that diachronic reading should be abandoned or ignored by those who favour a synchronic reading. Rather, diachronic reading's aim to discern the political and theological presuppositions and intentions of the narratives' authors must inevitably colour any search for esthetic meaning, namely synchronic reading.<sup>28</sup>

## 1.2 Research Aim and Overview

In terms of the discussion mentioned above, synchronic reading appears to be more profitable to deal with the conflict and contradiction in texts than diachronic reading, but it might be unadvised, from a viewpoint of methodology, to interpret

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<sup>20</sup> Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

<sup>21</sup> Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (Sheffield: The Almond, 1989).

<sup>22</sup> Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994).

<sup>23</sup> Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, 1978).

<sup>24</sup> Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of Chicago, 1983).

<sup>25</sup> Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Cornell University, 1983).

<sup>26</sup> Boris Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition: Structure of the Poetic Text and the Typology of Compositional Forms* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1983).

<sup>27</sup> Literary reading which seems to be a huge umbrella includes several readings influenced by structuralism, new criticism, semiology, and so on. The purpose here is to locate its position in the broad map of research, and to separate it from the "old literary analysis."

<sup>28</sup> A good example is Polzin's classical study which tries to combine the Deuteronomistic historical studies and narratives studies. Robert Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History. Part Two: 1 Samuel* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989). See also: Louis Jonker and Douglas Lawrie, eds., *Fishing for Jonah: Various Approaches to Biblical Interpretation* (Stellenbosch: Sun, 2005).



some texts like 1 Samuel 8-12 without recourse to diachronic research, such as the historical study of the Deuteronomistic history. As Jean Louis Ska stated, “the synchronic studies themselves, when they are conducted honestly and rigorously, cannot avoid the difficulties, jumps, or fractures, and the attempts to resolve problems of continuity, tension, or contradictions in various texts.”<sup>29</sup> In other words, synchronic reading indeed helps to mention the integrity of text and makes reading smooth and significant, but it might be unavoidable to ignore or rationalize the detail and nuance of text in itself. Hence, it is important to understand the nature of the problems in the text and thereby determine its methodology. For example, what is the nature of the problems in the text, 1 Samuel 8-12, if source analysis or literary analysis can only be viewed as diverse research method?

In his analysis of sociological studies, James Barr pointed out that “behind the Bible there were competing groups and strata of society and that where cohesive expressions of viewpoints appeared they represented the competing interests of these groups or strata.”<sup>30</sup> Stated another way, behind the texts were the ideologies of these social entities, and the literary text encodes a particular ideological worldview. It then transfers this constructed system of values and perceptions into its rhetoric. Hence, ideology relates not just to the production of literary texts, but to the historical production of each and every signifier and signified within a society. If Israel’s transition to monarchy is the subject of 1 Samuel 8-12, what is the ideology behind the complicated perspectives or the repeated narratives? If a story can reach a broader audience and arouse its interest, and clever depiction serves to deepen the ideological messages, what will be the ideological messages conveyed by the text of 1 Samuel 8-12? More simply put, the nature of the problems in the text, 1 Samuel 8-12, is the

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<sup>29</sup> Jean Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch* (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2006), xi.

<sup>30</sup> James Barr, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament* (New York: Oxford University, 2000), 111.

ideological issues.

Accordingly, the hypothesis of this thesis is that the drive behind the text of 1 Samuel 8-12 was not the accurate recording of history but ideological persuasion, which used the art of story-telling to express its specific concerns. Thus, on the one hand, the understanding of the characteristics of ancient biblical writing and its sociological developments might enable us to perceive the social and cultural nature behind the text in a new light. On the other hand, a sensitivity to the presentation and development of the story itself could offer us a glimpse into the embedded ideology behind the text. The purpose of this study is therefore to explore “who is saying what to whom for what purpose” in the text of 1 Samuel 8-12 through an analysis of the twofold manifestations of ideology, namely an ideological reading.<sup>31</sup> The specific aims in this report are (a) to reconstruct the material and ideological conditions under which the biblical text was produced in order to determine which group produced the text and whose socioeconomic interests it served and (b) to investigate how these conditions are encoded in reproducing a particular ideology in order to determine how the texts incorporate the particular ideologies or interests. For these objectives to be achieved, this thesis is divided into five main sections.

Chapter 1 briefly outlines some background information for the research. Apart from a review of the literature, which addresses both diachronic and synchronic aspects of the reading of the text of 1 Samuel 8-12, a research niche is provided, namely, the hidden worlds of ideology beneath the text. To dig for and discover the specific world, a multiple approach comprising socio-scientific and literary reading is suggested, though the detailed definition and methodological introduction will be

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<sup>31</sup> Ideological methodology, which pays attention to the hidden worlds of ideology and the unconscious, will be discussed in chapter 2 where a multiple ideological reading will be introduced and explained.

given in the next chapter.

Chapter 2 deals with the theoretical foundations for the development of the research. The concept and characteristics of ideology and ideological reading will be discussed by means of a survey of relevant scholarly works. With respect to methodology, as mentioned above, the study attempts to perform both an extrinsic analysis that discloses the specific situation under which the text was produced and an intrinsic analysis that comprehends the text's reproduction of ideology in the text's rhetoric. In other words, by an ideological reading is meant a way of systematically asking about the ideological interests embedded in the text.

Chapter 3 attempts to explore and reconstruct the particular circumstances under which the Deuteronomistic History was produced. The chapter begins with a concise discussion about the biblical account of the exile, and thereby investigates the sociological developments between the Neo-Babylonian Empire and Judah in the exilic period. As a matter of fact, how to evaluate the characteristics of ancient biblical writing influences the understanding of the so-called "exile" and its literary works. On the basis of the reassessment and reconstruction, this chapter goes further to pursue the exilic editing of the Deuteronomistic History, which might be regarded as a crisis literature inscribing a specific ideology.

After exploring the extrinsic analysis in chapter 3, chapter 4 draws attention to intrinsic analysis, which refers to an in-depth comprehension of the text's rhetoric in order to figure out the embedded ideology. The literary approach, namely narrative reading, is utilized as the main methodology to shoulder the task, but the diachronic viewpoint is not absent from the whole analysis.<sup>32</sup> That is because the historical

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<sup>32</sup> This approach is indebted to Robert Polzin for his contribution to the series of studies of the Deuteronomistic History, especially the methodology discussing in the first volume: *Moses and the Deuteronomist*. He attempted to combine a literary reading and a historical reading, providing a useful

production of each and every signifier and signified within a society is also related to the construct of ideology, which is not a synonym for ideas, thought or theology but rather for ideas with a specific social force.<sup>33</sup> In addition, conflict plot, which is a particular literary skill often used to reveal the core values and belief of a narrative, is chosen to explore how the text encodes its ideological production.

Finally, a summary is presented and a review of research findings is made for further research. While the former focuses on a descriptive perspective by reviewing the particular issues discussed in each chapter, the latter turns to an interpretive perspective by reflecting on the various themes and thereby rethinking the modern meaning for today.

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and insightful academic contribution. Cf. Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary study of the Deuteronomistic History* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980).

<sup>33</sup> Jonathan E. Dyck, *The Theocratic Ideology of the Chronicler* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1998), 1.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **IDEOLOGY AND BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION**

### **2.1 General**

What is an “ideological reading”? Danna Nolan Fewell, in her article titled “Reading the Bible ideologically: Feminist criticism”, asks several important questions: Isn’t every criticism ideological? Is any criticism more or less ideological than any other? If so, then what is so-called “ideological reading”?<sup>34</sup> Indeed, comprehending what ideological reading does is no simple task. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to describe the concept and characteristics of ideology and ideological reading, in an attempt to provide, based on a survey of relevant scholarly works, a methodological construction that will be applied in exploring 1 Samuel 8-12.

### **2.2 The Description of Ideology<sup>35</sup>**

In his lectures delivered at the University of Oxford in 1997, James Barr sketched the concept of ideology through some common speech usages, roughly

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<sup>34</sup> These questions roughly follow her discussion: Danna Nolan Fewell, “Reading the Bible Ideologically: Feminist Criticism,” in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application*, ed. S. R. Haynes and S. L. McKenzie (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 237-51.

<sup>35</sup> The term “description,” not “definition,” is chosen to manifest the complicated meaning of ideology, especially its complex development in recent years.

splitting up such usage into four different categories.<sup>36</sup> This categorisation would be an appropriate point of departure for our discussion and further exploration, since it might prove neither an authoritative definition, nor a thorough explanation.

Firstly, an “ideology is a world view or set of ideas that is so intensely held that factual realities and practical considerations have no power to alter or affect it.”<sup>37</sup> To explain the concept in such terms, Barr contrasts the ideological with the pragmatic. The former is characterised by the possession of beliefs and speculations that override any factual evidence or any indication of the practical possibilities, whereas the latter might share the same beliefs and speculations but those who adopt a pragmatic approach are likely to want to consider the facts in order to determine what is practically possible in a given situation, and may even be willing to adjust their beliefs and speculations so as to be able to cope with the realities concerned.

The second category is open to evaluation in terms of the quality and originality of ideas. When a few elements or the rough outlines of an original work are obtained second hand and become part of the world view of people who have not undertaken any original investigation in this regard, and who would have been incapable of understanding it even if they had done so, an ideology results. In other words, the character of ideology is the second-hand use of an original work. For example, Karl Barth was a great and foremost thinker, whereas Barthianism might be considered to be an ideology.

The third category is based on the unconscious nature of ideology. In terms of the categorisation, ideology can be seen as a determinate of one’s species, status, or background, no matter whether the person concerned is aware of such determination

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<sup>36</sup> Barr, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament*, 102-5.

<sup>37</sup> Barr, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament*, 102.

or not. This kind of understanding is particularly related to the issues of politics, race and gender.

In terms of the final category, ideology is seen as being comprehensive in some way, so that a mere idea can by no means be an ideology. Even though an individual may have an idea or an opinion that affects others, it is, nonetheless, not an ideology. Only when the idea or opinion is linked to all sorts of other thoughts about society, nationality, religion, and ethics within a specific system is an ideology, as such, present. That is why the term “system”, in reference to a complex framework, is often used in the description of ideology, especially in terms of Marxist or liberative construct.

Overall, Barr’s drafting of ideology gives us a starting point from which we can see that ideology may not be objective, but consists of ideas and views that have their basis not in some external reality, but in the social needs and interests of those who hold the ideas and views concerned.<sup>38</sup> As a political and literary concept, in fact, the term “ideology” has enjoyed a long and complex history. Previously, the reception and usage of the term was largely negative, as can be seen from the definitions of the term given in dictionaries and encyclopaedias of the time.<sup>39</sup> The main reason for such negative connotations could be related to the original Marxian sense of the term, though its use can, strictly speaking, be traced back to Destutt de Tracy’s coinage of the term, in 1793, for the history and theory of ideas.<sup>40</sup> Later, Marx refined the

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<sup>38</sup> Although the idea of the objective might be the ongoing debate, ideology is the opposite of it. As to the debate about objective, see Barr, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament*, 105.

<sup>39</sup> Roy Bhaskar wrote the explanation in *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Psychology* as this way: “Ideology. A false, and especially categorically mistaken, ensemble of ideas, whose falsity is explicable, wholly or in part, in terms of the social role or function they, normally unwittingly, serve.” See: R. Bhaskar, “Ideology,” in *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Psychology*, ed. R. Harre and R. Lamb (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 292.

<sup>40</sup> Napoleon then uses a new term, ideologues, in a negative sense to debase Enlightenment thinkers including Destutt de Tracy. M. Barrett, *The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 169.

definition of the term to one of particular relevance to the class struggle.

For Marx, ideology remains in a negative and instrumental category, as he sees it as a false consciousness or as an obfuscated mental process.<sup>41</sup> His primary concern, in the simplest of terms, is the network of economic class relations. He sees ideology as more a mental means of enslavement, operating in terms of ideas, beliefs, cultural practices and religion, than a physical one. Attention is, thus, paid to any unequal distribution of wealth, prestige, or control over the means of production, such as land, natural resources, and factories, with consideration being given to how ideology explains such phenomena in a given population.<sup>42</sup> Ideology is used, in the given case, to keep those who are enmeshed within exploitative situations in such situations, by justifying to them that their exploitation is necessary, unavoidable, and for their long-term benefit. In terms of such thinking, the concept of ideology cannot be understood without considering the notions of class and class conflict, specifically class consciousness. In other words, the dominant ideology is produced by the class in power in order to reproduce particular sets of class relations.<sup>43</sup> Ideology is, therefore, not only a form of mental enslavement, but is exactly what the dominant class uses to support its interests.

Since ideology is described as concealing or as eliding exploitation as mystification, the strategy of critiquing ideology is expected to be about a process of demystification, and of uncovering the means by which such ideology operates.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976).

<sup>42</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza. *Searching the Scriptures* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 260.

<sup>43</sup> For example, ideologies within art and literature can almost be traced back to the interests of the dominant social class.

<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, it is also important to remember that ideology simultaneously governs other social relations which depend on the differences among genders, ethnicities, educational levels, religions and so forth. Within this definition, several kinds of ideologies emerge, such as ruling-class ideologies and lower-class ideologies, or sexist ideologies and feminist ideologies. In fact, these ideologies cooperate, confront, and clash each other in the real world. They advocate their own specific difference and provide a basis for social control or social resistance when conflict appears.



Marx is convinced that the real causes of exploitation can be unmasked and an effort made to overcome them, if the ideology concerned is revealed.

Despite recognising both the value of such work and the nature of the construct of ideology, Louis Althusser does not find such a description satisfying, as it is overly limiting. He doubts that ideology is something that one can just unmask and then discard. For him, ideology is not merely a means of seeking to legitimate an oppressive situation that disappears with the surmounting of that situation.<sup>45</sup> Althusser redefines ideology as “a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.”<sup>46</sup> That is, as a complex system of values, ideas, images, and perceptions, ideology motivates people to see their particular position in the social order as natural, inevitable, and necessary, and encourages them to internalise an unreal relationship with the real world.

Fredric Jameson accepted Althusser’s redefinition, going further to suggest that literary texts and cultural products, in relatively general terms, may be understood as posing imaginary resolutions to social and historical contradictions.<sup>47</sup> The imaginary resolutions, according to Jameson, manifest primarily in terms of form. He believes that the attention that is paid to form exposes how the attempted resolution works, and makes the distinguishing marks of those social contradictions that are present clear.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, since this resolution takes place in formal terms, textual analysis must be

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<sup>45</sup> Roland Boer considers that Althusser begins in a curious fashion, with reproduction, in order to get to the long and detailed discussion of ideology itself. That is, the problem of the “reproduction of the conditions of production.” See: R. Boer, *Marxist Criticism of the Bible* (London: T & T Clark International, 2003), 16.

<sup>46</sup> L. Althusser, “ideology and ideological state Apparatuses,” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York and London: Monthly Review, 1971), 162. At one level, this thought of two strata is similar to the duality analysis suggested by structuralism.

<sup>47</sup> F. Jameson, *Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), 53-54. In other words, Jameson tries to connect the relation between base and superstructure (synchrony) with the history of modes of production (diachrony).

<sup>48</sup> Boer, *Marxist Criticism of the Bible*, 183. Like other cultural products, the analogy with literary texts is described as “symbolic act”, as efforts to resolve on a formal and then ideological level the contradiction to which they function as a response.

formal in nature if the contradictions that leave their traces in the form of the text are to be uncovered. The form in question includes the particular structure of a literary product. Jameson, therefore, regards ideologies as “strategies of containment”, because any critical questioning of the actual historical situation is closed off, and both its contradictions and the evidence of power struggles are repressed.

Terry Eagleton employs Althusser’s construct differently to Jameson.<sup>49</sup> According to Althusser, ideology is to be understood as the system of representations that is located in the everyday practices, such as rituals, of a society. Eagleton takes this a step further in speaking metaphorically of the system of representation as a text reflecting the power relations of a society.<sup>50</sup> He deems ideology to pre-exist the text, but holds that the ideology of the text defines, operates and constitutes the ideology concerned in ways that are unpremeditated, namely in the ideology itself. Ideology is, therefore, encountered in the discourse of every text – in both what a text says and in what it does not say. In other words, ideology relates not merely to the production of literary texts, but also to the historical production of each and every signifier and signified within a society.

All in all, albeit that Marx views the term “ideology” in a specific and pejorative sense, Marxism and its adherents have held different opinions of the term, which they have used variously. In the past, scholars have tried to rethink the meaning of the term and to expose the meaning in a dynamic way, playing down the term’s pejorative connotation and emphasising the positive notion of ideology, as expressing the values

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<sup>49</sup> Employing Saussurean semiotics, Eagleton exposes ideology as a language-based phenomenon that bears in a special way on the literature of a society. T. Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory* (London: Verso, 1978), 80.

<sup>50</sup> T. Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991), 1. Therefore, one of the tasks of ideological criticism is to “read” this text because ideology is to be explained in relation to discourse and power.

or world view of a particular social group or milieu.<sup>51</sup> As a matter of fact, Michele Barrett has correctly pointed out that “ideology is a generic term for the processes by which meaning is produced, challenged, reproduced and transformed.”<sup>52</sup> An ideological reading is, therefore, concerned with theorising about and critiquing the processes of meaning production as social and political realities. When such a reading is applied to biblical studies, biblical exegesis no longer remains a neutral act, but implicitly concerns the interests of, and the power relations between, both the author and the reader.<sup>53</sup> The next section of this chapter surveys the work of several biblical researchers who are engaged in ideological reading, or in so-called “ideological criticism”.

## 2.3 A Map of Ideological Reading of the Biblical Text

Generally speaking, most biblical studies, or so-called “mainstream biblical studies”, maintain that a text has an ideology, which often represents the value system and cultural mores of the biblical writer or text. By means of the help of sociological or anthropological criticism, locating the ideology can reveal the historical context of the text, and even provide some helpful information about it. In contrast, people are gradually made aware, in the light of new interpretation and hermeneutics, of the

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<sup>51</sup> When it comes to positive and pejorative of ideology, an interesting observation provided by Barr points out that “theologians, when they say ‘ideology,’ still mostly mean something bad; biblical scholars, when they say “ideology”, often means something good, particularly because it is not theology, or else, taking another path, they mean something bad, which is how things were in the Bible, even if theologians do not like to know it.” In fact, within the biblical studies circle, there are still lots of scholars who maintain that ideology means something bad, for example, Brevard S. Childs, who sees ideology as a symbol invariably negative and uses it to criticize other scholars. Barr, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament*, 116. Cf. B. S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (London: SCM, 1992), 173.

<sup>52</sup> M. Barrett, 1980: 97. Cite: G. Aichele et al., *The Postmodern Bible: The Bible and Culture Collective* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), 272.

<sup>53</sup> A brief and useful review for ideological criticism in biblical studies: T. Pippin, “Ideology, Ideological Criticism and the Bible” in *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 4 (1996): 51-78. The following discussion is indebted to her effort.

interpreter's ideology. They argue that ideology not only connects to the multiple focalisers of the biblical text and to the ethical choices and repercussions of specific biblical readings, but also to the belief system of the interpreters and their social locations. In order to more clearly trace the concept of ideological reading in relation to the biblical text, the discussion will consider two horizons, namely that of text and that of reader.

## **2.3.1 Horizon of the Text**

### **2.3.1.1 Formalist Reading**

According to formalist reading, the implied author has both the ability and the authority to create ultimate unity in the narrative. Everything, including perspective, plot, character, conflict, rhetoric, and so on, belongs to the implied author's strategy for a unified ideology. In other words, aesthetics acts in the service of ideology, following the goal of the implied author. What ideological reading tries to do is to uncover the implied author's strategies.

The major person to raise the issue of the ideological nature of the Hebrew Bible is Meir Sternberg. In his famous monograph, *The poetics of biblical narrative: Ideological literature and the drama of reading*, Sternberg claims that ideology is about persuasion and about how the text motivates or manipulates the reader.<sup>54</sup> He, therefore, makes an important distinction between the didactic and the ideological nature of biblical texts. "Didacticism is ideological writing," he wrote, "but not vice versa, and the dividing line is precisely where ethics and aesthetics meet to generate

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<sup>54</sup> M. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 482. He considers that "the biblical storyteller is a persuader in that he wields discourse to shape response and manipulate attitude."

the art of persuasion.”<sup>55</sup> That is to say, the moral presented in the text is the nature of ideology. Sternberg takes a clear modernist position in his reading, which convinces him of a singular voice presented in the Bible. He proclaims, “If the Bible is ideologically singular – and I believe so – then its singularity lies in the world view projected, together with the rhetoric devised to bring it home.”<sup>56</sup> Ideology, in this respect, is not that of a system of ideas that express and formulate the interests and needs of the group, but like a singular conviction of verbal inspiration, with an omniscient narrator who has a plan and world view that he or she inculcates. Obviously, Sternberg finds coherence of the biblical texts linked by an ideological thread.

Another example, which is similar to that of Sternberg, is that of Jr Kenneth M. Craig, who defines the term ideology as “a deeply held and interlocking set of religious, social, and political beliefs or attitudes about the world and how the world works”<sup>57</sup>. In his reading for the book of Jonah, *A poetics of Jonah: Art in the service of ideology*, Craig explains that the implied author uses ideology as a unifying factor to make the art of the work coalesce. Though, for example, the characters and the narrator have different ideological perspectives, the multiple ideologies are unified by the implied author into a singular ideology.

### 2.3.1.2 Post-Structuralist Reading<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 483.

<sup>56</sup> Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 37. For Sternberg’s thinking, Barr considers his using of ideology comes close to the theology of Christian biblical theology. Cf. Barr, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament*, 126.

<sup>57</sup> Jr K. M. Craig, *A Poetics of Jonah: Art in the Service of Ideology* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 8.

<sup>58</sup> This term post-structuralism is used to distinguish a different approach from formalism, which includes a structuralist studies. Jobling explains that post-structuralism does not claim simply to supersede structuralism, it rather assumes structuralism, and subverts it from within. According to Derrida, one can deconstruct only where one has posited structure—to subvert/cancel/ reverse binary oppositions is obviously the most characteristic move in Derrida. D. Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative: Structural Analyses in the Hebrew Bible 2* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1986), 12.

However, the position on the singular ‘truth claim’ for the Bible raises a number of questions: Do texts have one ideology or several ideologies? Does every text have its own ideology or ideologies?<sup>59</sup> As a result, recently, there has been a move away from a formalist approach towards post-structuralism. Unlike the singular ideology suggested by formalism, post-structuralism pays attention to plural ideologies, which come in many voices, speak many languages, and reside in many different disciplines and critical approaches. New insights into, and voices of, the Bible are, therefore, to be found in the traditional fragments, chaos, and loose ends.

Eagleton, as a noted Marxist, reads the book of Jonah as reflecting the diverse collapse of meaning.<sup>60</sup> He does not find a singular truth claim in the book of Jonah, namely an ideological unity, but a chaotic world, with various perspectives. Furthermore, God is no longer ultimately seen to be merciful. Rather, God becomes “a spineless liberal given to hollow authoritarian threats, who would never have the guts to perform what he promises”.<sup>61</sup> This kind of reading strategy, in fact, is related to Eagleton’s literary theory that ideology is not to be equated with a specific sign or with a particular author’s intended use of signs. Accordingly, he views everything and everyone in the text as being questionable and unstable, that is, he calls into question the ideological unity of the book of Jonah.

David Penchansky adopts a similar approach in reading the book of Job.<sup>62</sup> He traces the philosophical and literary movements of formalism, Marxism, neo-Marxism, and deconstructionism to establish his method of reading of the ideological conflict in Job. When it comes to the disharmonic nature of the text, he argues that “the

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<sup>59</sup> Aichele et al., *The Postmodern Bible*, 278.

<sup>60</sup> T. Eagleton, “J.L. Austin and the Book of Jonah,” in *The Book and the Text: The Bible and Literary Theory*, ed. R. M. Schwartz (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 231-36.

<sup>61</sup> Eagleton, “J.L. Austin and the Book of Jonah,” 231.

<sup>62</sup> D. Penchansky, *The Betrayal of God: Ideological Conflict in Job* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1990). At one level, his theoretical construct is influenced by Jameson.

disharmonic elements of the book of Job create a kind of whole; not in hopeless disarray, as some would claim, but neither as a coherent story”.<sup>63</sup> The text itself, in its conflicting dialogues of Job, Job’s wife, Job’s friends, and God, is filled with multiple signifiers and interpretive impact. Moreover, like Jameson, Penchansky’s work also reflects a reading in the direction of political unconscious.<sup>64</sup>

According to Jameson, all texts have a political unconscious. He deems that texts are not only production, but also the narrative representation of a culture’s mode of production and social class struggle. Since the needs and desires of social classes are utopian, ideology and utopia come to form a dialectical relationship. Texts, therefore, produce the tensions of lived relations, on both a personal and a communal level, that is, ideological conflicts. In other words, the ideological conflicts in a text are connected with the social and semiotic systems that produce it. Inasmuch as texts are unstable, meaning is also fluctuant, though it is connected to a web of social, political and economic relations. Therefore, it is not surprising that ideological reading has come to be closely identified with the politics of reading.

Based on Jamesonian theory, Roland Boer reads the description of the reign of Jeroboam in 1 Kings 11–14, 3 Reigns 11–14 (the Greek text of 1 Kings 11–14), and 2 Chronicles 10–13 in a Marxist way, and goes on to ask: “How might the ideological features of the text, which come in the form of religious issues, be understood as a class discourse?”<sup>65</sup> Boer uses the Jamesonian allegorical method, which includes

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<sup>63</sup> Penchansky, *The Betrayal of God*, 70.

<sup>64</sup> In another work, he writes, ‘I see literary activity as having a lot to do with desire, choice, and conflict, the three things that we do when we grab for something.’ He, therefore, argues that biblical text “spins off stories at the juncture or point of contact between the reader and the text. The richest reading of a text, then, is not the one that can most effectively defend a particular angle of vision, but one that can hear a number of perspectives in juxtaposition.” D. Penchansky, ‘Up for Grabs: A Tentative Proposal for Doing Ideological Criticism’, in *Ideological Criticism of Biblical Texts*, ed. Jobling and Pippin (Atlanta: Scholars Press 1992), 35.

<sup>65</sup> R. Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 100. In fact, Jamesonian theory is not the only focus which Boer pays attention to. Boer actually publishes a volume, *Marxist Criticism of*

three horizons, namely political or literal, social, and historical, to reveal the base and superstructure of the modes of production of the ancient Hebrew society and the strategies of containment in the literary text.<sup>66</sup> The economic and social history of the ruling class, both during their exile and on their return is, therefore, portrayed differently in each of the three versions of the Jeroboam story, with the different discourses of the social classes concerned being in the ideology of the text. Apparently, Boer sees the roles of class and royal ideology as the key points for interpreting the text.

According to this line of argument, David Jobling also offers his different, but related, readings. Jobling connects several kinds of criticisms, such as structuralism, deconstructionism, post-structuralism, and so on, to show the possibility of ideological readings using multiple approaches. In his commentary *1 Samuel*, for example, he explores testing the possibility of organising a book of the Bible according to Eagleton's "triptych of ... class, race and gender", which are the guiding categories of recent ideological criticism.<sup>67</sup> Like Penchansky, Jobling combines multiple readings of the text with an attempt to conduct a deliberate ideological reading.

### 2.3.1.3 Socio-Political Reading

The socio-political approach, strictly speaking, is similar to the post-structuralist approach, especially regarding how both approaches tend to focus on social class. Most scholars who undertake socio-political readings of biblical texts tend to rely largely on the theories of Eagleton. Ideology, in terms of his pivotal argument, not

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*the Bible*, in order to introduce several Marxist theorists systematically and to interpret various texts based on those theorists' contributions.

<sup>66</sup> Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 30-42. cf. Boer, *Marxist Criticism of the Bible*, 183.

<sup>67</sup> D. Jobling, *1 Samuel* (Minnesota: The Liturgical, 1998), 3. Cf. T. Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 5.



only has something to do with the production of literary text, but also relates to the production of a society. In other words, ideology can be seen as the political manifestation of the repressed or oppressed imagination of the author, narrator, character, ancient readers, or contemporary readers. He argues that politics, including political discourse and action, and literature find themselves inextricably ideologically linked.

In his article titled “Social class and ideology in Isaiah 40–55: An Eagletonian reading”, Norman K. Gottwald attempts to uncover the prophecy contained in Isaiah 40–55 as a text that counters the dominant ideology of the ruling social class.<sup>68</sup> More precisely, what concerns Gottwald is “who is saying what to whom for what purpose”.<sup>69</sup> Isaiah 40–55, for him, is about “the ideological formation of the professional political and religious elites possessing the means and confidence to be the bearers of historic change in the redivision of the political and religious map of the ancient Near East.”<sup>70</sup> The primary ideological matters are to return from exile in Babylon and to restore a Judahite nation. For this reason, the text is both determined and a determinant. On the one hand, the text expresses the interests of a politico-religious reality, which sees itself as representing the cosmic-political and soon to be re-established realm. On the other hand, it functions in terms of deliverance and restoration. That is, the text of Second Isaiah is used as a weapon in the struggle that occurs during the Babylonian exile to maintain the role and status of a former ruling class.

A similar example, as presented by Ched Myers, is that of a political reading of

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<sup>68</sup> N. K. Gottwald, “Social Class and Ideology in Isaiah 40–55: An Eagletonian Reading,” in *Semeia* 59 (1992): 43–57.

<sup>69</sup> Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction*, 9.

<sup>70</sup> Gottwald, “Social Class and Ideology in Isaiah 40–55,” 55.

Mark's story of Jesus.<sup>71</sup> Myers uses the basic Marxist idea of either subversion or support of the status quo to define the term "ideology", regarding the study of ideology as being for the purpose of determining not only how symbolic discourse functions socially, but also on whose behalf it does so. In his political hermeneutics, the two approaches of sociological criticism and narrative criticism are employed, with phrases, such as "world view" or "social strategy", being identified with ideology.<sup>72</sup> Myers supposes that, after the careful examination mentioned above, an ideologically literate reader can know the ideologies of the Markan context in the Jewish war against Roman control.

## 2.3.2 Horizon of the Reader

### 2.3.2.1 Privileged Sphere Reading

Despite the large number of ideological discussions focused on the horizon of text, Stephen E. Fowl provides a different angle on ideology and raises the issue of whether ideology is inside or outside a literary text. Most ideological readings, according to him, do not stem directly from the biblical text, but from scholarly observations, in the light of their own economic, ethnic, social or gender-based interests.<sup>73</sup> According to Fowl, ideology is actually read into the biblical text by the scholars concerned, though they deny it.

Hence, Fowl's reading strategy involves dismissing the idea that texts have

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<sup>71</sup> C. Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988).

<sup>72</sup> Gale A. Yee in his article, "Ideological Criticism: Judges 17-21 and the Dismembered Body" recorded in *Judges and Method* displays a resembling way, which uses socio-history criticism and narrative criticism to explore ideological issue. G. A. Yee, "Ideological Criticism: Judges 17-21 and the Dismembered Body," in *Judge & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Gale A. Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 138-60.

<sup>73</sup> S. E. Fowl, "Texts Don't Have Ideologies," in *Biblical Interpretation* 3.1 (1995): 15.

ideologies and focusing more on the relationships between texts and social practices. He also pays attention, simultaneously, to how one might alter the social practices underwritten by particular texts, especially biblical texts. Fowl takes the Abraham story as a litmus test, inspecting it by way of the Bible and extra-biblical texts. In terms of the story, he asks: Which of these, or of other ideologically loaded interpretations of Abraham, is the ideology of the text?<sup>74</sup> His intention, in short, is to prove that the biblical text is innocent and redeemable, regardless of the violence in the text and its interpretive history. In terms of such a perspective, he rejects any reading about texts as hopelessly or irredeemably racist, patriarchal or elitist, because it is the result of ideologising the biblical text.

However, to prove that the biblical text is innocent does not mean that Fowl excludes the existence of ideology. On the contrary, he conducts an ideological reading from a position of privilege, replacing ideological reading in the hands of white male scholars. Indeed, he insists that the coloniser, especially in the form of a white man, can maintain control and power over the colonised in the light of their interpretations of the biblical text, since the biblical text itself is innocent. That is why he resists a Third World reading, but still accepts those works that are written by Third World white male scholars.<sup>75</sup> Apparently, the coloniser, who is still embedded within the system of privilege, tries to grab the power of interpretation, even if the colonisers concerned have undergone a process of liberal conscientisation.

### **2.3.2.2 Marginalised Reading**

Whereas ideological reading has been used by First World scholars for a long time, a tendency to read the Bible from the margin is increasing, and can be seen in

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<sup>74</sup> Fowl, "Texts Don't Have Ideologies," 28.

<sup>75</sup> Fowl, "Texts Don't Have Ideologies," 32.

Third World readings, African readings, feminist readings, mujerista readings, and so on. Such readings might also utilise either the Marxist theory or formalism as their reading strategy, though attention is paid to the reader rather than to the text in the reading. In other words, the location of marginalised reading is the world before the biblical text, especially the specific situation or the personal characteristic, with the reading itself being rich and diverse.

R.S. Sugirtharajah, for example, identifies the margin as a site of creative revision, where “the continuing task of the interpreter is to investigate and articulate the truth and to confront the powers that be”.<sup>76</sup> In the light of such a reading, cultural wisdom and the specifics of contemporary issues of class and economy are all brought to the act of biblical interpretation. Sometimes, either personal experience or the collective memory of their community is also called into discussion, and goes further to affect the hermeneutics of the biblical text. No matter how the Bible has been used by imperialism, apartheid, sexism, and colonialism, the new hermeneutics claims to rethink the interpretation of the Bible, in a form of liberation reading.

Compared with the moderate tendency suggested by Sugirtharajah, Richard S. Briggs adopts a more radical position, attempting to stress select parts of the margin to their own advantage.<sup>77</sup> He refuses the traditional conservative claim that is made in connection with biblical studies that insists that one interpreter can produce a universal and authoritative reading of a biblical text. According to him, the push behind biblical reading that amounts to identity politics should receive attention,. With

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<sup>76</sup> R.S. Sugirtharajah, “Introduction: The Margin as a Site of Creative Re-Visioning,” in *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 7.

<sup>77</sup> R. S. Briggs, “Buried with Christ”: The Politics of Identity and the Poverty of Interpretation,” in *The Book and the Text: The Bible and Literary Theory*, ed. R. M. Schwartz (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 276-303. Interestingly, it seems to me that Briggs and Fowl share the same attitude to the text, which suggest that ideology is outside the text, but actually they occupy different positions of the interpretative spectrum.

this push, interpreters are asked to make public their own social locations, reading them as the point of departure. In the light of such thinking text cannot have ideologies if an ethical reading is kept. Some texts, for example, that advocate practising violence against women and homosexuals should not be accepted as being the result of identity politics. That is to say, resistance to the specified kind of text should be considered as an ethical option, since ideology is outside the text, with the sacred text then remaining intact.<sup>78</sup>

Most “mainstream” biblical studies view marginal readings as being filtered only by the centre. No matter what such readings suggest, even a wide, acceptable reading of material that is dominated by issues of race, class, gender, or sexuality, if they are radical, they can be regarded as remaining marginal if their voices belong to the unfiltered.

### **2.3.2.3 Involved Reading**

In the hermeneutics agenda emerging from the Third World, biblical reading interweaves between ancient and modern ideologies. Painful memories or imprints, such as “dangerous memory”, resulting from oppressive systems are brought together as rich resources that help the reader to appreciate biblical stories of oppression and liberation.

Gerald O. West, who is very much a product of his times, tried to construct his biblical hermeneutics in South Africa.<sup>79</sup> In his book, *Biblical hermeneutics of liberation: Modes of reading the Bible in the South African context*, West not only

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<sup>78</sup> This ethical force is present in Althusser’s conception of ideology as a material practice. Since the lived relation between people and their world, the ethical question belongs at the heart of the ideological discussion.

<sup>79</sup> G. O. West, *Biblical Hermeneutics of Liberation: Modes of Reading the Bible in the South African Context* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).

summarises and analyses the liberation hermeneutics in South Africa practised by I.J. Mosala, A. Boesak and others, but also develops his ideological reading, by means of the classic works of Eagleton and Jameson. Regarding ideological reading, he asks, “but what of those who are not and cannot be organic intellectuals and yet who are committed to solidarity with and accountability to the poor and marginalised? How do I as a white, middle-class, South African male...speak for the oppressed?”<sup>80</sup> The solution seems to him to be to move away from ‘speaking for’ and ‘listening to’ towards ‘speaking to and with’ the oppressed. Moreover, he chooses to work with communities of ordinary readers in producing contextual readings of biblical texts.

### 2.3.3 Summary

The above discussion clearly shows that a strategy that adopts multiple approaches gradually comes to manifest a poignant tendency in ideological reading. Biblical scholars, no matter to which horizon they belong, have become aware that ideologies are vital pivots, influencing class stratification, and gender and race relations, the political struggle, and so on. They endeavour to expose and illustrate the structure and dynamics of ideologies inside or outside the text by means of using various approaches. An ideological reading entails a deliberate effort to read against the grain of texts, of disciplinary norms, of traditions, and of cultures.<sup>81</sup> In other words, an ideological reading attempts to remove the stable ground, or epicentre, of the dominant interpreter, creating new possibilities of meaning and action.

As a “hermeneutic of suspicion” or a “resistance reading”, however, ideological reading does not refer to a suspicion or distrust of the Bible, as well as of its history or

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<sup>80</sup> The emphasis is paid to transformation and repentance of individuals, not systemic change. West, *Biblical Hermeneutics of Liberation*, 213.

<sup>81</sup> D. J. A. Clines, *Interested Parties: The Ideology of Writers and Readers of the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 18.

authority, as the conservative-minded religious often think. In contrast, such a reading tends to be suspicious or distrustful of the interpreter, in which sense it can be fully compatible with biblical criticism, though suspicious of the ‘conservative’ interpreter.<sup>82</sup> Ideological reading, hence, serves as a reminder that reading is a subjective act done by, to, for, with, or against certain subjects.

## **2.4 Methodology: Multiple Ideological Reading**

In this section of the current chapter, the various features of ideological reading discussed above will be considered to provide a methodological construction that will be applied in exploring 1 Samuel 8-12. In addition, the introductory monograph by Gale A. Yee will be used as a guideline for the construction.<sup>83</sup>

### **2.4.1 Ideological Strategies and their Uncovering**

In order to narrow down the multifarious agendas in ideological reading and to concentrate on a specific methodological construct, it is necessary to deal with an important concept, namely that of ideological strategies. Ideological strategies are akin to what Jameson calls “strategies of containment”, which purpose to organise and direct people’s lives.<sup>84</sup> In other words, ideology, as a complex system of values, ideas, pictures, images and perceptions, motivates people to see their particular place in the social order as natural, inevitable, and necessary, in terms of some specific strategies, as can be seen below:<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> A brief account: A. Thiselton, “Biblical Studies and Theoretical Hermeneutics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*, ed. J. Barton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 105-6.

<sup>83</sup> Yee, “Ideological Criticism,” 138-60. Although I have already mentioned the monograph above, her explanation is quite useful to manifest the advantage of ideological reading.

<sup>84</sup> Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 53-54.

<sup>85</sup> Yee, “Ideological Criticism,” 140-141.

1. Ideologies unify social groups by linking the abstract level of ideas with the concrete level of social practices. Ideologies, in this sense, are action-oriented.
2. Ideologies rationalise certain interests, beliefs, or behaviours by providing credible explanations for them.
3. Ideologies legitimate such beliefs or interests by sanctioning them, by having people accept their authority.
4. Ideologies universalise historically specific values, ways of acting, and so forth as the only valid ideals for everyone for all time.
5. Ideologies naturalise the above by identifying them with the “common sense” of a society, so that they become seemingly self-evident and “natural”.

In short, the above-mentioned strategies are focused on separating any critical questioning of the real historical situation, and on repressing both the contradictions and evidence of power struggles. As long as ideologies are embedded, people can figure out the confusing world according to their particular imaginary relationship with the real conditions of existence.

In our case, the authors encode a particular ideological world view in order to explain their contradictions and daily struggles, and then transfer the constructed system of values and perceptions into the rhetoric of the literary text, namely 1 Samuel 8-12. At one level, the ideology can be viewed as a production of socio-historical realities, like the dramatic script, whereas the literary text, like the dramatic production, orchestrates and reworks the ideology to reproduce it in its own



way:<sup>86</sup>

history/ideology → dramatic text → dramatic production

history → ideology → literary text

In other words, an ideological reading presumes that the text is a production of an ideologically charged historical world that reproduces a particular ideology with an internal logic of its own. While ideological reading of the Bible often appropriates the models constructed by Marxist literary critics, as in the above discussion, these literary critics seek to redefine the relationship between base and superstructure.<sup>87</sup> They perform both an extrinsic analysis that reveals the circumstances under which the text was produced and an intrinsic analysis that investigates the text's reproduction of ideology in the text's rhetoric.<sup>88</sup> More precisely, extrinsic analysis aims to reconstruct the material and ideological conditions under which the biblical text is produced, in order to determine which group produced the text and whose socioeconomic interests it serves. In contrast, intrinsic analysis pays attention to decoding the particular ideology reproduced under those circumstances and addresses how the texts incorporate the particular ideologies or interests of their gender, class, race, and so on.

By and large, since texts express the ideology and interest of a group in a hidden way and function in terms of the power struggles within a society, what the two analyses utilised here make clear is "who is saying what to whom and for what

<sup>86</sup> Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, 64-69. Cf. Yee, "Ideological Criticism," 141. Yee takes *Hamlet* as an example and explains further that *Hamlet* does not mechanically "reflect," "mirror," or "express" Shakespeare's dramatic text of *Hamlet*, but generates a unique production.

<sup>87</sup> For Marxist literary critics, base means socioeconomic relations, while culture, ideology, politics, and legal system represents superstructure.

<sup>88</sup> In spite of the complex interrelation between production and reproduction, extrinsic and intrinsic analyses should be regarded as two sides of the same coin, the core insight of ideological approach remains that literature is grounded in historical, real-life power relations, that is, literary is regarded as an ideological production of social practices. Yee, "Ideological Criticism," 141.

purpose”<sup>89</sup>. A brief discussion about extrinsic analysis and intrinsic analysis, for the purpose of our investigation, follows in paragraphs 2.4.2 and 2.4.3, respectively.

## 2.4.2 Extrinsic Analysis

The extrinsic analysis applied in ideological reading often makes use of the social-historical and the social-scientific approach to explore the complicated social structures and situations of specific historical groups and their interrelationships with other parts of the society.

If Thomas Römer is right, for instance, 1 Samuel 8-12 might have been written during the exilic period.<sup>90</sup> 1 Samuel 8-12 is, thus, a crisis literature written by Dtr in order to explain the events of 597 and 587/586 that produced a major crisis for the collective Judean identity and gave rise to significant destruction and movements of the population. In the case in question, the drive behind biblical historical writing does not amount to the real recording of history, but to ideological persuasion, and whoever sets out to persuade must use rhetoric and the subtle devices, whether direct or indirect, of the art of fiction.<sup>91</sup> Hence, the socio-scientific approach, including several kinds of themes, such as Deuteronomistic historical studies, the sociology of knowledge, social groupings and social roles, anthropological perspectives, and so on, will be chosen to trace organisational development in pre-exilic and exilic Israelite society.

Overall, the major focus of extrinsic analysis is the mode of production dominant in the society producing the text, which often refers to the complete operation of

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<sup>89</sup> Eagleton, *Ideology*, 9.

<sup>90</sup> Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 111. More details will be discussed below.

<sup>91</sup> Amit is convinced that readers should distinguish between studying biblical historiography as a historical source and examining it as an ideological sermon, and avoid general statements and assumptions with regard to any of the books. Y. Amit, *History and Ideology: An Introduction to Historiography in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1999), 114.

social relations and forces of a society's material production.<sup>92</sup> The questions, therefore, would be: What were the major social, political, and economic structures in society at the time of the pre-exilic and exilic Israelite society? What were the conflicts, struggles, and contradictions taking place among the various social arrangements? What were the ideologies produced by the groups concerned?<sup>93</sup>

### 2.4.3 Intrinsic Analysis

Intrinsic analysis, in contrast, makes use of literary-critical methods, such as narrative criticism or structuralism, to accomplish its task. Catherine Belsey considers that the way in which people ordinarily talk, tell stories, and relate those stories to their lives is one of the central means by which ideology is represented and reproduced.<sup>94</sup> To learn what is ideologically important about a community or a culture is, therefore, to listen carefully to the stories that it tells and to how it tells them.

In our case, the biblical text is presented as a symbolic resolution of real social contradictions, inventing and adapting "solutions" to unresolved ideological dilemmas.<sup>95</sup> Hence, intrinsic analysis requires an in-depth investigation of rhetoric, since the text itself really has an artful ability to persuade its audience to accept a particular ideology, with the text's rhetoric being displayed as a form of power.<sup>96</sup> The

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<sup>92</sup> Yee uses an example of three dominant modes to explain the complicated social relationship. See Yee, "Ideological Criticism," 142. Another useful discussion see P. Dutcher-Walls, "The Social Location of the Deuteronomists: A Sociological Study of Factional Politics in Late Pre-Exilic Judah," in *JSOT* 52 (1991): 77-94.

<sup>93</sup> These questions are taken from Eagleton. Cf. Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, 44-63.

<sup>94</sup> C. Belsey, *Critical Practice* (New York: Methuen, 1980), 42.

<sup>95</sup> As Amit indicates that the art of story-telling plays an important part in the relation between history and ideology, that is, in conveying history as a narrative and in its manner of presentation. A story can reach a broader audience and arouse its interest, and clever depiction serves to deepen the ideological messages. Amit, *History and Ideology*, 115.

<sup>96</sup> That is to say, the text re-inscribes its ideological strategies in written form through the rhetorical features of persuasion.

commonly recognised elements of structure suggested by narrative criticism, such as characterisation, conflict plot, repetition, point of view, symbolism, irony, foreshadowing, framing and so on, will be considered and employed in decoding the text. Said another way, the specific way of portraying the different characters, of arranging the conflict plots, of expressing the opposite point of view, and so on, will be useful in uncovering the particular ideology concerned.

## 2.5 Conclusion

To sum up, the ideological reading utilized to be methodology does not claim that its interpretation of a text is better than all other interpretations, but only appears as an intentional methodological choice. What this reading tries to interpret is not the text but the ideological subtext, namely the assumptions, attitudes, and interests that lie beneath the statements of the text. The term ideology, at the same time, is not used as a synonym for ideas or theology. Rather, the particular social forces which make the ideas or thoughts emerge should be considered simultaneously, and that is the reason why extrinsic analysis and intrinsic analysis should be investigated respectively.

Barr rightly indicated, as a matter of fact, that ideological reading is the method which systematically asks about the ideological interests inscribed in the texts.<sup>97</sup> He believes that one of its profound effects is the opposite of what theologians have intended, namely to dismantle most or all of the theological realities referred to in the text. When readers admit that the surface hides power struggles, they actually admit that it is impossible to interpret from a neutral position. To interpret is to choose sides

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<sup>97</sup> For him, the theological reality is like ideas of retribution, covenant, sin, the maleness of God, metaphors of the king and warrior for the divine. Barr, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament*, 133.

and to become engaged in the struggle. Keeping this position in mind, the next chapter will discuss with the historical issue of 1 Samuel 8-12, that is, extrinsic analysis.

## **CHAPTER 3**

# **WHAT IS THE EXILE? A RETHINKING BASED ON A SOCIO-SCIENTIFIC OBSERVATION**

### **3.1 General**

In the previous chapter the quest towards the concept and characteristics of ideology and ideological reading was discussed. A survey of relevant scholarly works was given for advocating a multiple methodological construction. The aim of this chapter is thus to explore and reconstruct the material and ideological conditions under which the Deuteronomistic History was produced, namely the extrinsic analysis of 1 Samuel 8–12. This will be the first of two principal parts in which the ideological reading will be the focus of attention.<sup>98</sup> To begin with, the discussion will focus on the characteristics of ancient biblical writing in general, and particularly regarding the writing of history in ancient Israel. Next, a further investigation will extend to the sociological developments between the Neo-Babylonian Empire and Judah in the exilic period. On the basis of the above-mentioned context, eventually, the exilic editing of the Deuteronomistic History, that is the background of 1 Samuel 8-12, will be pursued as specific extrinsic information to be applied in the subsequent chapter.

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<sup>98</sup> Again, the term ideology is not utilized as a synonym for ideas, thought or theology, but rather for ideas or language with a particular social force.

### 3.2 The Biblical Account of the Exile: History or Story?

The time span following the fall of Jerusalem, commonly referred to as the “exilic period,” is in several aspects regarded as the essential era in the history of ancient Israel. Scholars normally view this era as a formative period in Israel’s religious and cultural development. Noth, for example, considers that the Deuteronomistic History was a reflection on Jerusalem’s defeat and the deportation.<sup>99</sup> He deems that the Deuteronomistic History was written shortly after the final event narrated the improvement of king Jehoiachin’s situation at the Neo-Babylonian court (2 Kings 25.27-30), about 560 BCE. In order to designate the historical context of the Deuteronomistic History, the concept of the “exilic period” was coined and has had a profound effect on the academic world.<sup>100</sup>

On the basis of the recent developments in archaeology, however, and the new understanding of the different people surrounding ancient Israel, it is possible to argue that the above so-called “exilic period” is rather misleading from a social-historical point of view; moreover, it is probably in essence an ideological construction.<sup>101</sup> The exilic period, generally speaking, is normally assigned to the time between 597 BCE and 539 BCE, that is, from the first deportation of the Jerusalem court and upper class to Cyrus’ rise to power. Unfortunately, it does not correspond to the Neo-Babylonian period historically (636 BCE to 539 BCE), nor to the fact that a great part of the deportees or emigrants stayed voluntarily in Babylonia and Egypt after 539 BCE.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, 79.

<sup>100</sup> See Steven L. McKenzie and M. Patrick Graham, ed., *The History of Israel’s Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

<sup>101</sup> Particularly in later Jewish culture this view of the Babylonian period subsequently developed into a kind of “national symbol,” and the exilic people who suffered “by the waters of Babylon” became a well-known Jewish motif. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 110. Cf. Lester L. Grabbe, ed., *Leading Captivity Captive: “The Exile” as History and Ideology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

<sup>102</sup> In addition, from the assignment of the concept of an exilic period emerges a false impression that the deportation was a unique event specific to the Judean history. As a matter of fact, it ignores those

Besides, following the implication of biblical texts (2 Kings 25.21; cf. 2 Chronicles 20-21), one would have to believe that the entire population of Judah had been deported to Babylon, leading to the so-called “myth of the empty land.”<sup>103</sup> But it definitely does not correspond to the historical reality. In short, those biblical texts of the last days of Judah cannot simply be read as “historical documents,” and the definition of the “exilic period” should be rethought and revalued.<sup>104</sup> Before the issue of the exile, hence, will be discussed further in 3.2, attention will be paid to the characteristic of the ancient biblical writing, as it is related to our present work and has to be reconsidered.

As a result of recent research, biblical scholars have gradually become aware that the logic of the ancient storyteller is quite different from that of most modern readers, who indeed consider that history to be an exploration of what exactly happened in the past, and, assume that as a genre of literature, it is a description of what exactly happened in the past.<sup>105</sup> On the contrary, the main task of the ancient storyteller is not to record past events objectively<sup>106</sup> and accurately, but to render an account of the

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deportations that had taken place under the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian dominations, including in Samaria and Judah.

<sup>103</sup> As for the “myth of the empty land,” Barstad provides several explanations like the period is notoriously poor with regard to sources, or the period certainly was not regarded as a glorious one in the later tradition. H. M. Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 90-91. However, there are some authors who are still supporting the “Myth of the Empty Land,” like D. S. Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the latter prophets* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 104-06, or E. Stern, *Archaeology in the Land of the Bible vol. 2. The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods 732-332 BCE* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 303-11. For more discussions see below.

<sup>104</sup> Carroll provides an important caveat to the concept of “the exile”: “exile is a biblical trope and, whether it may be treated as an event in the real socio-economic historical world outside the text or not, it should be treated as a fundamental element in the cultural poetics of biblical discourses.” Hence, “it may have historical referents, but it is as a root metaphor that it contributes most to the biblical narrative.” Robert P. Carroll, “Exile! What Exile?” in *Leading Captivity Captive: ‘The Exile’ as History and Ideology*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 64.

<sup>105</sup> Indeed, the art of storytelling plays an important role in the interaction between writer and readers, and it is natural that the ancient storyteller who wishes to influence, persuade and attract their readers find themselves, deliberately or not, employing literary method. Amit, *History and Ideology*, 108-109; cf. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 41.

<sup>106</sup> As the term “objective” is used, it does not mean that I ignore the serious hermeneutics issue, the debate of objectivity, coming from French theorists. Rather, “objective” and “accurate” are simply regarded as adjectives here.



past, namely to show how the causes or origin of a given phenomenon, such as a cultural practice or social custom, even a biological circumstance, brought about the effects of the present. J. Van Seters, in his book titled *In Search of History*, compares the biblical writing with some historiographical works from other cultures, particularly Greece, Mesopotamia, the Hittites, and Egypt and then provides five criteria for identifying historical writing in ancient Israel:<sup>107</sup>

1. Historical writing was a specific form of tradition in its own right rather than the accidental accumulation of traditional material.
2. Historical writing considered the reason for recalling the past and the significance of past events and was not primarily the accurate reporting of the past.
3. Historical writing examined the causes in the past of present conditions and circumstances.
4. Historical writing was not personal but national or corporate in nature.
5. Historical writing was literary and an important part of a people's corporate tradition.

In light of these criteria, it is imperative that the biblical writing should not be read as a modern history book, a fact that has been accepted by the scholarly world.<sup>108</sup> Yet, what if those biblical writing are treated with a proper prescription like historical-critical methods, could they come back to the original reliable status, and yield exact historical information? To put it in another way, is there any possibility

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<sup>107</sup> J. Van Seters, "The Problem of Childlessness in Near Eastern Law and the Patriarchs of Israel," *JBL* 87 (1968): 401-8. Cited by S. L. McKenzie, *How to Read the Bible: History, Prophecy, Literature—Why Modern Readers Need to Know the Difference, and What it Means for Faith Today* (New York: Oxford University, 2005), 25.

<sup>108</sup> For the further discussion see Lester L. Grabbe, ed., *Can a 'History of Israel' be Written?* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

that the biblical writing is merely distorted, corrupted, or become unreliable as a result of a long tradition process? If, for example, the three different biblical sources for “the last days of Judah,” namely Kings, Chronicles and Jeremiah, are examined or compared carefully with the intent of finding out the most reliable information, is it possible to reconstruct what exactly happened?<sup>109</sup>

Obviously, this kind of hypothesis of interpretation may fail to do justice to the very nature of ancient texts.<sup>110</sup> Again, what we are facing here is not a historical account of what exactly happened in “the last days of Judah,” but a prime piece of ancient writing, which specifically aims to explain why the things happened and its effects to the present.<sup>111</sup> For this reason, whereas the description in 2 Kings 24-25 may not be coherent or logical to a modern rational mind, it did not bother the ancient storyteller at all. When the ancient storyteller says “all the people,” according to the ancient rhetorical devices, he does not really mean “all the people,” but a large number. And when he mentions a large number, it may simply be because he wants to emphasize the importance of what had happened.<sup>112</sup> By and large, biblical writing was written for specific ideological purposes though it is not the same as saying that these texts are purely ideological and do not reflect historical reality or contain any historical information at all.

Whereas all biblical writing contains ideology, more precisely, ideology has

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<sup>109</sup> This is the method which Cogan and Tadmor try to employ. M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *2 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 320-21. Jones is another obvious example. He attempts to argue from the biblical texts that there were no sacrifices in Judah between 586 BCE and 520 BCE. Jones, “The Cessation of Sacrifice after the Destruction of the Temple in 586 B. C.,” *JTS* 14 (1963): 12-31.

<sup>110</sup> On the other hand, this methodological issue is inevitably related to the important debate of contemporary hermeneutics: the question of historical truth and the relationship between history and literature. For a very short survey: Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible*, 2-7.

<sup>111</sup> See also chapter 4 below.

<sup>112</sup> Interestingly, as to the definition of “people,” those who belonged to members of the peasant proletariat, the non-landowning families, despite being a majority, probably did not count as “people” at that time. Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible*, 102.

actually formed a natural part of historiography at the beginning of writing. The distinction made between history on the one side and ideology on the other is therefore problematic and unnecessary.<sup>113</sup> Even if the ancient storyteller has his own purpose to reuse the ancient traditions and reproduce the specific historiography, for example, to demonstrate something for the contemporary society, it does not mean that these texts have nothing to do with historical information. Consequently, to claim that Nebuchadnezzar did not lay siege to Jerusalem or that no deportations took place whatever would be ridiculous, though deportation in the ancient Near East was often regarded as an ideological issue, and for Neo-Babylonian deportation policy there is much less information than for that of the Assyrian empire.<sup>114</sup>

Simply stated, although those biblical texts of the last days of Judah cannot simply be read as historical documents, it does not mean that the historical reality, namely the deportation or other historical incident, was not existent. As the author of an ancient writing, furthermore, the main purpose of the biblical author is not to explain what exactly happened in the past, but to comprehend the past which could be utilized to explain the present. In other words, the biblical writing is a kind of conscious writing in order to interpret historical incidents and construct specific ideologies, which should properly be understood in its own milieu. Hence, the next paragraph will focus on the exilic social environment, especially the dynamic relationship between the Neo-Babylonian Empire and Judah, since the composition of

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<sup>113</sup> Although there has been a tendency which is based on a misunderstanding of the biblical narratives claims that the Chronicler is more “ideological,” and the Deuteronomist more “historical,” it actually ignores the nature of the biblical text. As we all know, the story of Chronicles is quite different in several respects from that of 2 Kings. Nevertheless, it might be fair to say that both narratives are based on different ideological perspectives, and try to reach different purposes.

<sup>114</sup> For instance, at the fortress of Arad, a center of Judahite control and military operations in the south, a group of ostraca, or inscribed potsherds, were found in the rubble of the destruction containing the frantic orders for the movements of troops and transportation of food supplies. In other words, the biblical texts indeed contain historical information which needs to be accepted critically. Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of its Sacred Texts* (New York: Touchstone, 2002), 294.

1 Samuel 8–12 belongs to the exilic edition of the Deuteronomistic History.

### 3.3 Israel in the Exilic Period

In order to provide a brief image of exilic climate, the first stage in this paragraph is a brief sketch of the international circumstances from the reign of Josiah to the end of Judah. On the basis of this sketch, a further discussion about the sociological developments between the Neo-Babylonian Empire and Judah in the exilic period will then be given. Many of the historical accounts could indeed be found in biblical texts, but the *Sitz-im-Leben* of a literary form occurring in biblical texts does not necessarily tell everything about the social situation, such as the social structure or social conflict.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, as stressed several times in the above-mentioned discussions, the biblical texts were written with specific motivations and therefore cannot simply be read as historical documents. Therefore, some contributions from other academic disciplines will simultaneously be involved into the exploration in order to reconstruct the probable social situation at that time.

#### 3.3.1 Prelude to the Exile: From Josiah to Destruction

By the middle of the seventh century, the Assyrian Empire, which dominated the Near Eastern World, had been experiencing an extraordinarily rapid decline because of its extensive waging of war.<sup>116</sup> As early as the 730s BCE, in fact, the Assyrians had

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<sup>115</sup> Indeed, we have only very sketchy knowledge of historical and thus also sociological developments during the exilic period, since there are no direct sources apart from those for the period shortly after 587. Carroll, “Exile! What Exile?,” 69; Cf. Rainer Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 119.

<sup>116</sup> After Assurbanipal, who was the last great Assyrian king, became entangled with and died in a fratricidal war in 626 BCE, the enormous empire came under pressure from the rising Medes and Neo-Babylonians. Assyria fell in 614 BCE, the capital Nineveh in 612 BCE, and the last remnant of the kingdom in Haran finally also succumbed in 606 BCE. Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994), 198.

successively lost control of their vassals and provinces in Palestine. Taking advantage of this opportunity, the Neo-Babylonians and the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty in Egypt were both rising and competing for dominance. The Egyptians even made an alliance with Assyria in order to combine the remaining Assyrian forces against the Babylonians. This situation incited the tiny kingdom of Judah to aspire to a certain political autonomy, or at least to encourage nationalistic dreams among certain circles.

The ascension of Josiah to the throne in 639 BCE coincided with this major international political change. By means of internal innovation, namely through the Deuteronomistic movement, Josiah strengthened the national unity and planned to establish a new position for Judah within this constellation of power.<sup>117</sup> However, when Josiah was about to reap the full harvest of his program, shortly after the fall of the last stronghold of Assyrian power at Haran in North Syria, he was killed by Pharaoh Neco II in 609 BCE since the move ran afoul of Egyptian interests.<sup>118</sup> As a result, Judah temporarily became a vassal of Egypt.

Neco II appointed the eldest son of Josiah, Eliakim, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. In this way, on the one hand, the interests of Egypt, which was intent on entering upon the Assyrian legacy in Palestine, had been preserved. On the other hand, Neco II countered the plans of the assembly of the rural aristocracy of Judah (עַם-הָאָרֶץ), who had earlier put Josiah on the throne for the sake of the national renewal and then anointed a younger son of Josiah, Jehoahaz, as a king to continue the

<sup>117</sup> Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of its Sacred Texts* (New York: Touchstone, 2002), 245.

<sup>118</sup> Egypt under Pharaoh Neco II was campaigning through Canaan in order to bolster the remnants of the Assyrian army so as to secure eventual Egyptian sovereignty over the international corridor against the Neo-Babylonian challengers. Josiah challenged Neco II at Megiddo and lost his life. Accordingly, the last years of Judah were marked by shifting control of the land between the great powers of Neo-Babylon and Egypt. Norman K Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 371-2.

innovation policy.<sup>119</sup> But shortly afterwards, the Neo-Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar took control of the Levant by defeating the Egyptian armies at Carchemish in 605 BCE. Since the Egyptians withdrew to their heartland, Jehoiakim had no other choice than to switch his allegiance and pay tribute to the Neo-Babylonian king.<sup>120</sup> Nevertheless, when the Neo-Babylonians attempted to invade Egypt itself, in 601 BCE, they faced the stubborn resistance and were defeated and driven back. The Egyptians once more controlled the south of the Levant.

Jehoiakim was apparently convinced that the withdrawal of the Neo-Babylonian army had been an occasion for regaining nationalist nerve and decided to revolt at the first opportunity.<sup>121</sup> After a severe campaign, Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem. During the siege, Jehoiakim died and was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin, who surrendered probably to avoid the destruction of Jerusalem. The young king Jehoiachin was exiled to Babylon, along with the royal family, the court and the upper classes of the society.<sup>122</sup> In Jerusalem, Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah, was appointed as a vassal regent by the Neo-Babylonians. This deportation marks the beginning of the Neo-Babylonian exile.

In the meantime, the unique double structure of Judahite sovereignty emerged: there were two kings, the banished Jehoiachin in Babylon and Zedekiah, resident in Jerusalem. In a way, it is evident that the deportation of Jehoiachin was regarded as a real transfer of the court to Babylon, a sort of government in exile. According to the

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<sup>119</sup> About עֲמֶל־הָאָרֶץ, see Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel*, 98-100.

<sup>120</sup> Albertz considers that "after his brief interlude as an Egyptian vassal, as early as 604 BCE, Jehoiakim had had to submit to the superior power of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar." Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, 236.

<sup>121</sup> Jehoiakim probably joined an Egypt-led coalition against Babylonia at that time.

<sup>122</sup> According to Babylonian inscriptions, Jehoiachin is mentioned to be a prisoner along with other kings from the Levant, and apparently retained his status of Judahite king in the eyes of the Neo-Babylonians and most Judahites. In addition, the members of the court were at first treated respectfully, as cuneiform tablets from the years around 592 BCE, with receipts for deliveries of oil to "Jehoiachin, king of Judah" and other people in his entourage, attest. Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel*, 119; cf. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 108.

excavation, the Babylonian delivery receipts mentioned not only Jehoiachin, but also his five sons, and they explicitly called Jehoiachin “king of Judah.”<sup>123</sup> Moreover, apart from those parts of the upper class who were already in exile and continued to see Jehoiachin as their king, a part of the population also believed in the rapid return of Jehoiachin as shown by the prophecy of Hananiah (Jeremiah 28:4). By contrast, although Zedekiah, Jehoiachin’s uncle, was often in doubt and viewed as a sort of temporary substitute for Jehoiachin, especially by those adherents of the deported king, he was the king of the Judahite state in Jerusalem in the full sense and controlled the concrete authority.<sup>124</sup>

In 595 BCE an anti-Babylonian coalition, which may have been inspired by a rebellion that had broken out in Babylonia, was organized by the vassal states in the west.<sup>125</sup> The coalition then turned again to Egypt since the Pharaoh Psammetich and his son Hophra had gradually been increasing Egyptian influence on the Levantine coast. Zedekiah and his advisers became openly pro-Egyptian and reneged on their allegiance to the Neo-Babylonians. The Neo-Babylonian army therefore invaded Palestine and besieged Jerusalem in 589 BCE, but there was no support forthcoming from the Egyptian army.

In 586 BCE the city was conquered and this time heavily destroyed as were most of the Judean fortresses and fortified places. The temple and palace of Jerusalem were burned down and the remaining treasures were taken to Babylonia. The king was captured, and members of the court and the upper class, as well as skilled workers,

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<sup>123</sup> Kurt Gallig, ed *Textbuch zur Geschichte Israels* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1979), 46; Cited by Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel*, 119.

<sup>124</sup> As a governor, however, he unavoidably was confronted with a reduced administrative apparatus and the absence of a strong army.

<sup>125</sup> In fact, as early as 594 BCE there was a renewed anti-Babylonian conspiracy in Jerusalem in which several small states in the region took place. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, 237.

were deported. The city of Jerusalem was destroyed, along with its temple. The existence of Judah as an independent state came to an end, and a second deportation was organized. A member of the Shaphan family, Gedaliah, was then appointed governor of the province of Judah in Mizpah. As one of the old families of the Judahite official aristocracy, he was murdered by the anti-Babylonian resistance some years later, which probably led to a new punitive action of the Babylonians, even a new deportation in 582 BCE and an important Judean emigration to Egypt.

In terms of what happened during the exilic period, unfortunately, there is only very sketchy knowledge of historical and sociological developments at that time, because of the lack of direct and concrete sources apart from those for the period shortly after 586 BCE. However, the elites who were deported were skilled in writing and invented the ideological account of the “myth of the empty land.”<sup>126</sup> According to such biblical texts, one easily gets the Sunday school impression that the Neo-Babylonian Empire is an evil nation who came to destroy the true faith in Judah due to their wicked nature, and that the carrying off of Judeans into exile was a mean punishment or base revenge. Undoubtedly, this kind of interpretation is exactly what the Deuteronomistic History tries to convey. Nevertheless, it does not mean that it was not the truth at that time, nor does it imply that the description of the Deuteronomists is totally unreliable. But at this point it is advisable to reevaluate the whole matter of the relationship between the Neo-Babylonians and Judah from a rather different perspective.

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<sup>126</sup> In this way, they produced an idea that Yahweh had left Judah to accompany them into exile, and even shaped a specific identity of themselves being the true Israel. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 109. Also see Hans M. Barstad, *The Myth of the Empty Land: A Study in the History and Archaeology of Judah during the ‘Exile’ Period* (Symbolae Osloenses: Scandinavian University Press, 1996); Cf. Thomas L. Thompson, “The Exile in History and Myth: A Response to Hans Barstad,” in *Leading Captivity Captive: “The Exile” as History and Ideology*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 101-119.



### 3.3.2 Life under the Neo-Babylonians: A Socio-Historical Reconstruction

When Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptian Army at Carchemish in 605 BCE, a new era had dawned in the ancient Near East. Until it was conquered by Cyrus in 539 BCE, the Babylonian Empire had experienced perhaps the most brilliant decades in its whole history. At that time, the Neo-Babylonian Empire represented a highly developed civilization, with an advanced political and economic structure. Apparently, it was the intellectual ability of Nebuchadnezzar that made it possible to establish Babylonian military hegemony.<sup>127</sup>

In terms of Nebuchadnezzar's sovereignty over his empire, it simply coincided with the Mesopotamian tradition. The whole existence of the empire entirely depended upon the import of materials such as metals, stone, and timber, and all sorts of food and luxury items due to the poor natural resources.<sup>128</sup> The conquest of the neighboring countries can therefore be understood as a necessary act to secure control of vital trade routes, and the consolidation of the empire was also for the collection of taxes and tribute. In order to secure the import of cedars into Babylonia, for example, Nebuchadnezzar not only constructed a road for transportation, but also appointed himself the fierce defender of the inhabitants of Lebanon against their enemies.<sup>129</sup>

The Neo-Babylonian Empire was not the only country which enforced this kind

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<sup>127</sup> When Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptian Army at Carchemish in 605 BCE, a new era had dawned in the ancient Near East. He was indeed one of the great kings in history, even if the biblical portrait has made him notorious. However, we have little information after 594 BCE when the Babylonian Chronicle concludes and royal inscriptions become undatable. Lester L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What do We Know and How do We Know it?* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 188-9.

<sup>128</sup> It is fair to say that, trade and imports played extremely important roles in the Neo-Babylonian economy. Even if the economy was still mostly in the hands of the royal palace and the temple, those private families would come to contribute more and more to an increasingly prosperous private economy, which would be to the benefit of the other countries.

<sup>129</sup> Larsen, "The Tradition of Empire in Mesopotamia" in *Power and Propaganda* (1979), 98-100; Cited by Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible*, 124.

of economic policy and military strategy. Since an early period, as a matter of fact, the economy of the Mesopotamian countries had already developed an aggressive and expansionist convention, which increased with further territorial expansion.<sup>130</sup> For those countries in Mesopotamia, the sole purpose of having an enormous military and administrative system was to secure a stable flow of goods from the peripheral, conquered territories into the centre of the empire. On the basis of this fact, it should be no surprise why the Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar felt compelled to attack Judah, as he had done.

However, following this logic of thought, was Judah really annihilated by the Neo-Babylonian Empire to the point of becoming an empty land? Or, more precisely, was it possible for the Neo-Babylonian Empire to annihilate completely such a useful resource, Judah? If the Neo-Babylonians did not depend on the accumulation of wealth that was produced outside their own country, the total annihilation of a conquered territory would of course make sense. Nevertheless, this was exactly not the case. As we have mentioned above, this empire did rely on the accumulation of wealth based on the production outside its own country, and the long series of campaigns against Hattu might have been waged in order to secure the collection of tribute and because of the fact that Judah had functioned as a military buffer zone between Mesopotamia and Egypt.<sup>131</sup> Hence, it would be nonsensical for the Neo-Babylonian Empire to annihilate such a rich and helpful country like Judah. In a rational way, even if a military reaction was inevitable, for economical reasons, namely the accumulation of wealth, it would rather be in their interest to maintain, or even increase, the existing modes of production.

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<sup>130</sup> Theoretically, the more we figure out how the imperial system used to run, the easier we realize what happened when Nebuchadnezzar enforced his policy of territorial expansion.

<sup>131</sup> He indicates that the Akkadian word for tribute appears also in 1.13 of the Babylonian Chronicle, describing the conquest of Judah in 597 BCE. Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible*, 125. See also A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Winona Lake: Indiana, 2000), 102.

Indeed, the traditional claim that Palestine was poor and Babylonia was rich is only a half truth since far too little attention has been paid to the large economic importance of agricultural production in ancient Israel. From a broad socio-economic point of view, ancient Israel was not infertile but abundant in natural resources and was always producing more agricultural products than she herself could use.<sup>132</sup> A good example would be wine and olives, which might have been of the greatest economic value in ancient times.<sup>133</sup> Although many kinds of economic crops like barley, beer, and sesame oil were all produced in Mesopotamia, grapes and olives could not be planted there but only in the western parts of Mesopotamia. Hence, the production of wine and olives was of enormous importance in ancient Israel as well as the rest of the Mediterranean countries at the time.

With regard to the production of olives, recent archeological research at the Philistine site of Tel Miqne, ancient Ekron, in the Shephelah, has uncovered 161 large Iron Age II B/C installations, capable of mass producing at least an average of 1000 tons of olive oil per year.<sup>134</sup> Needless to say, it points to the enormous economic significance of olive oil production in ancient Palestine. At the same time, a special mention should be made of the fact that Tell en-Nasbeh, biblical Mizpah, was one of the places where olive oil was produced and might have been exported to Mesopotamia.<sup>135</sup> Interestingly, the evidence seems to indicate that Tell en-Nasbeh was one of the sites where Judean settlements not only continued, but even flourished

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<sup>132</sup> See O. Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel* (Winona Lake: Indiana, 1987).

<sup>133</sup> Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible*, 125. Cf. Dandamayev, "Neo-Babylonian Society and Economy," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, ed. J. Boardman (Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 272-275.

<sup>134</sup> In Judah, as a matter of fact, a major oil industry existed in the late Iron age. D. Eitam, "The Olive Oil Industry at Tel Miqne-Ekron in the late Iron Age," in *Olive Oil in Antiquity: Israel and Neighbouring Countries from the Neolithic to the Early Arab Period*. ed. D. Eitam and M. Heltzer (Padova : Sargon, 1996), 167-196. Cited by Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible*, 129.

<sup>135</sup> Remains of industrial oil installations have been found at Tell en-Nasbeh, Tel Beit-Mirsim, Tel Beit-Shemesh, Tel Gezer, Tel Batash, and Tel Miqne.

during the Neo-Babylonian period.

On the other hand, the wine production was also quite crucial for ancient Israelite life and society. According to Pritchard, a storage capacity of 25000 gallons of wine had been found at Gibeon.<sup>136</sup> He suggested further that the cistern might have had a similar function and dating to what Albright discovered at Tell el-Ful. Those storage facilities can be considered to be important evidences to prove the existence of wine production in the Neo-Babylonian period. All in all, ancient Israel was indeed productive. As Palestine always produced more than it could consume, Judah had lots of wine and olive oil as well, which would be of considerable economic interest to the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

Accordingly, it is necessary here to offer an alternative reconstruction of what happened in “the last days of Judah” in 586 BCE, in the face of the problematic traditional understanding which is convinced of a complete destruction. In light of the economical reasons for wealth production and accumulation, Judah, which was an already existing and successful organism, might simply have been assimilated by the Neo-Babylonians. Nebuchadnezzar took over Judah by capturing the king and the aristocracy, who were identical with the state. As a matter of fact, to keep foreign kings and officials in Babylonia should not be regarded as a pension retirement scheme for foreigners whom the Babylonian king liked, but a part of the system for controlling the empire, namely a part of the imperial policy.<sup>137</sup> Even if the biblical account seems to imply that king Jehoiachin was treated kindly and given a seat above

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<sup>136</sup> J. B. Pritchard, *Winery, Defences, and Soundings at Gibeon*. With Contributions by W. L. Reed, D. M. Spence, and J. Sammis (Museum Monographs). (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1964), 1-27. Cited by Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible*, 130. Barstad reminds, however, that as no residue was found in the Gibeon cellars, there is no actual proof that they ever contained wine.

<sup>137</sup> On the whole, the Babylonians treated the defeated Judeans very much in the same way that they treated the other conquered peoples. Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century BCE*, trans. David Green (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 61.

the other seats of the kings (2 Kings 25.27-30), Nebuchadnezzar, like his predecessors or successors, did not respect foreign royalty for their high standing.<sup>138</sup> Besides, a number of artisans were probably deported for the sake of some constructions in Babylon, where the economy was booming, and the artisans were needed for Nebuchadnezzar's many building projects.<sup>139</sup> The Judean state was thus replaced with a Neo-Babylonian state.

From a social historical perspective, since Judah was not completely destroyed by the Neo-Babylonians, this new milieu did not produce a large-scale effect upon the production of Judah. According to the archaeological evidence, whereas several sites like Jerusalem, Tel Beit-Mirsim, Beth-Shemesh, Lachish, and Ramat Rahel shows clear traces of the destruction brought about by sharp campaigns in the west, those settled in the northern part of Judah and Benjamin might have been almost totally unaffected by the event.<sup>140</sup> More specifically, it was mainly the hill country of Judah which suffered deportations and destructions under Nebuchadnezzar, while the rest of the country was left more or less intact. Following this strategy, most economic and political benefit which had originally existed in Judah could be preserved and reused by Neo-Babylonians.

Besides the concrete and visible damage, as well as the severely damaging effect

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<sup>138</sup> Obviously, this is a kind of ideological construction as well.

<sup>139</sup> For Nebuchadnezzar's enormous building activity, see Schmökel, *Geschichte des alten Vorderasiens* (1957), 313-314. Cited by Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible*, 126.

<sup>140</sup> Archaeological excavations have demonstrated beyond doubt the continued existence of a considerable Israelite material culture in the Negev, and in particular in the area of Benjamin. In fact, that Judah was not completely destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar has actually been known for quite a while now. See K. M. Kenyon, *The Bible and Recent Archaeology* (Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox, 1987), 143; Tadmor, "The Babylonian Exile and Restoration," in *A History of the Jewish People*, ed. H. H. Ben-Sasson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 161; Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible*, 112-117. However, there are still some archaeologists who refuse this revised and obviously more balanced view of the period of the "exile," like Shiloh, who insists on the almost total destruction of the towns of the Judean Kingdom in 586 BCE. Shiloh, "Judah and Jerusalem in the Eighth-Sixth Centuries B.C.E.," in *Recent Excavations in Israel: Studies in Iron Age Archaeology*, eds. S. Gitin and W. G. Dever (Winona Lake: Indiana, 1989), 102.

on national and religious pride, the destruction of the temple should also be explained within this context. It is a mistake to treat the temple as a religious institution somewhat isolated from the rest of the society though this perspective has been accepted widely and uncritically. In fact, together with the Judean king and the aristocracy, the temple in Jerusalem was not merely a religious institution but a major landowner and an enormously important economic institution, similar to the role of temples in other ancient Near Eastern cultures.<sup>141</sup> The destruction of the temple in Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar must therefore be viewed as a means of gaining economic and political control, and as part of Nebuchadnezzar's strategy of imposing his own superstructure on Judean economy and polity.

Taken as a whole, the very sharp distinction of the social situation in Judah which is made between the periods before and after 586 BCE is inappropriate, and the description of total destruction in Judah should be regarded as an ideological construction, which reflected a kind of contemporary atmosphere, and simultaneously served as a purposed writing.<sup>142</sup> That is to say, to claim that the centre of gravity was moved from Judah to Babylonia is problematic and to assume that the "material" culture went on in the Land under difficult conditions whereas the "spiritual" culture moved to Babylonia is also debatable. Any attempt to make sharp distinction between the material remains of a culture and its intellectual activity fails to acknowledge the

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<sup>141</sup> An important theory related to this argument is provided by a Latvian scholar, J. P. Weinberg. He illustrates his theory with examples from Asia Minor, Babylonia, and Egypt, and suggests that the temple, at that time, was like today's bank and commercial center. If so, the temple would not be a religious institution isolated from the rest of the society. J. P. Weinberg, "Die Agrarverhältnisse in der Bürger-Tempel-Gemeinde der Achämenidenzeit," in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im Alten Vorderasien* (ed. J. Harmatta and G. Komoróczy; Budapest, 1990), 443-46; Cited by Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*, 226-27.

<sup>142</sup> According to the sources that we do have access to, sources that are steadily growing in number and importance, there are clear indications of cultural and material continuity before and after 586, rather than any enormous gap. The gap is rather to be considered a construction of later tradition. That is to say, most scholars working in this area would accept, at least, that "exilic" Judah was not a tabula rasa, see J. Blenkinsopp, "The Bible, Archaeology and Politics, or The Empty Land Revisited," *JSOT* 27 (2002), 169-87.

way in which societies basically constitute organic inherent structures which function in dynamic interrelationship.<sup>143</sup> According to this line of thought, hence, the writing of the exilic Deuteronomistic History, which is regarded as the background of 1 Samuel 8–12, should be discussed with the above-mentioned context in mind. This is the focus of the discussion in the next paragraph.

### **3.4 The Deuteronomistic History as a Crisis Literature**

#### **3.4.1 The Multiple Attitudes toward the Exilic Crisis**

At one level, the events of 597 BCE and 586 BCE indeed produced a major crisis for the collective Judean identity and simultaneously led to widespread destruction and population movements. The social conditions among those who remained in the land and the Babylonian and Egyptian Gola are apparently different.<sup>144</sup> Albertz indicates that there are three principles which can manifest the sociological developments of the exilic period. He provides a brief sketch:<sup>145</sup>

1. The loss of statehood led to a dissolution of the state alliance which was partly compulsory, and partly voluntary. The Israel of the exilic period consisted of at least three major groups in separate territories where they were subjected to different historical developments, had different interests, and in part came into conflict. Therefore, the tendency towards splintering within various territorial groups, namely the tribes, the northern and southern kingdoms, which was already recognizable in the pre-exilic period continued

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<sup>143</sup> A good example is the Book of Lamentations. It was probably produced in Judah after the disaster of 586, but still maintained high quality. For a useful explanation, see: Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel*, 122.

<sup>144</sup> Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 90-111.

<sup>145</sup> Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, 374-75.

in an intensified way at a new level.

2. The loss of a central political authority led to the revival of decentralized forms of organization along kinship lines. Due to the Neo-Babylonian policy, the family or the family association formed afresh the main social entity in the Israel of the exilic period.<sup>146</sup> Those relics of tribal organization which had never been completely forgotten revived, such as the elders again became significant and took over limited local and political functions of leadership alongside priests and prophets.
3. The loss of the state alliance led to a penetration of group boundaries from outside. The culture shock which emerged from constant confrontation with members of other nationalities significantly affected the Judaeans, above all in the Gola and then in the homeland. To begin with, membership of a specific group became something that one had to prove time and again by individual decision. Furthermore, religious confession came to be regarded as a guarantee of social identity. As a consequence, the Israel of the exilic period gradually manifested the features of a community with a religious constitution. The most important point is that the world of foreign religions with which the people of Judah was confronted every day presented a constant challenge.<sup>147</sup> How to overcome it theologically was therefore the unavoidable task.

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<sup>146</sup> Alberty, *Israel in Exile*, 54.

<sup>147</sup> Whereas in the monarchical period, belonging to the people of Israel or Judah naturally depended on descent and place of residence, this was changed by the deportations. In the Diaspora, people had to confess their Judaism deliberately, which is why the confessional symbols of male circumcision, keeping the Sabbath, and food laws then became essential for building identity. In other words, it is clear that the exilic, and particularly post-exilic, community reveals the typical behavior patterns of a minority community that has closed ranks tightly to maintain identity and faith. Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel*, 154-55. Also see, Daniel Smith-Christopher, "Reassessing the Historical and Sociological Impact of the Babylonian Exile (597/587-539)," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, & Christian Conceptions*, ed. James M. Scott (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 33-36.



These descriptions are essential for understanding the sociological developments during the exile. Of particular interest for our present purpose is item 3. Although the events of exile certainly produced a major impact on the collective Judean identity and it can hardly be argued that this whole issue is a pure invention of modern biblical scholarship, it can certainly be said that the deportations affected at most a minority, especially the intellectual and economic elites who were deported. In other words, the destruction of Jerusalem affected the intellectual and economic elites more than the peasants and underdogs.

With the distinctive military campaign, the king was deported, the temple was damaged and the unity of Judah had come to an end. The traditional pillars which supported the ideological and political coherence of a monarchic state in the ancient Near East had fallen into ruin. The elites, particularly the royal officials, had also been separated from their sources of power. Whereas it was quite logical to explain this situation by the defeat of the national deity Yahweh by the more powerful Babylonian gods, elite groups tried to overcome this crisis, producing ideologies meant to give meaning to the collapse of Judah, namely to resolve the contradiction by linking the abstract level of ideas with the concrete level of social practices.

In terms of this phenomenon, a good analysis by means of sociological studies is provided by Römer, who is influenced by A. Steil's approach and tries to discover the reactions of the elite groups to the fall of Judah.<sup>148</sup> According to the analysis, three types of attitudes to the crisis are distinguished, that is, the prophet, the priest and the mandarin who particularly refers to the descendants of the scribes and other officials of the Judean court. A summary of the three attitudes is illustrated as follows:<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 111.

<sup>149</sup> The terminology, "Mandarin" is quoted from Römer, who coined the term to mention a specific

	<i>Prophet</i>	<i>Priest</i>	<i>Mandarin</i>
<i>Situation</i>	Marginal	Representative of the former Power	Belonging to the high officials
<i>Legitimization</i>	Personal knowledge	Tradition	Intellectual instruction
<i>Semantic of crisis</i>	Hope for a better future	Return to mythical origins	Construction of a history
<i>Reference</i>	Utopia	Myth	History

Generally speaking, the prophetic attitude belongs to those who stand on the margins of society, but nevertheless are able to communicate their views.<sup>150</sup> For them, the crisis could be viewed as the beginning of a new era.<sup>151</sup> A well-known example of this is the so-called “Second Isaiah,” which is the conventional title given to those oracles provided by the anonymous prophet or prophetic group in the exilic period and then collected in the second part of the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 40-55).<sup>152</sup> In light

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role in the exilic period, namely the Deuteronomists. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 112.

<sup>150</sup> They have often been viewed as taking up a critical position vis-à-vis the status quo and functioning as the society’s conscience, a role requiring them to stand outside of the establishment. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 164; Robert P. Carroll, “Whose Prophet? Whose History? Whose Social Reality? Troubling the Interpretative Community again Notes towards a Response to T.W. Overholt’s Critique,” *JSOT* 48 (1990), 33-49. About prophecy in crisis, see: Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 177-88.

<sup>151</sup> Albertz rightly mentions that “it seems natural to those of us who know the future course of the history of Israelite religion that the exile had to come to an end some time.” In fact, “this was by no means a matter of course to people at the time, for whom the future was still open.” That is to say, for the prophets it “took a far-reaching change in the world political situation and quite powerful arguments in theological interpretation to set this new beginning going.” Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, 412.

<sup>152</sup> As to the sociological background of this group who shares its anonymity with the majority of exilic and post-exilic prophecy, it is hard to determine the details because of the lack of historical information. However, by “Deutero-Isaiah”, it is possible to understand “a group of theologians gathered round a master that came from circles of descendants of the temple singers and cult prophets of the Jerusalem temple with their nationalistic attitude, and was intensively concerned with the prophecy of Israel.” Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, 414-5.

of “Second Isaiah,” the exile is considered as a necessary transition to a new order and a recreation of Israel by Yahweh as is actually repeated in Isaiah 43.18-21. Most scholars are convinced that such oracles (Isaiah 43.18-21) were probably written when the Persian king Cyrus was about to defeat the Babylonian empire. In this case, “Second Isaiah” should be understood as a propagandist of Cyrus, whose arrival is presented as the beginning of a new era, and he himself is called the messiah of Yahweh (Isaiah 45.1-7). At the same time, Yahweh is promoted to be the only real God, and there is no one besides him (Isaiah 45.21). Accordingly, the monotheistic theology is coined and used in Isaiah 40-55 to demonstrate that the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation were not due to the weakness of Yahweh, but a “pedagogic project” to create a new Israel.<sup>153</sup>

Next, the priestly attitude, which insists that the only way to overcome the crisis is to go back to the sacral God-given origins of society and to ignore the new milieu, is the conservative representatives of the collapsed social structures.<sup>154</sup> The so-called Priestly Document in the Pentateuch includes several ancient Israelite narratives such as stories and genealogies presenting the origins of the world and of humankind, stories about Israel’s patriarchs, stories about Israel’s sojourn in Egypt and the exodus out of Egypt, and the wandering in the wilderness.<sup>155</sup> All the important institutions for the rising Judaism are set in mythical origins and may be regarded as typical of the priestly position at the time of the end of the monarchy and the destruction of the temple. For example, the Shabbat institution is founded contemporarily with the

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Gottwald, “Social Class and Ideology in Isaiah 40-55,” 43-57.

<sup>154</sup> Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 113.

<sup>155</sup> Basically, these stories function within the genre of ancient history writing partly as an account, but that is not its primary intent. Rather, it serves to explain the reasons or causes for the difficulties of human life within the setting of ancient Israel’s domestic structure, such as the national catastrophe in 597 BCE. McKenzie, *How to Read the Bible*, 36. On the other hand, the law of antiquity or precedence might be an important point to explain these kinds of phenomena, see Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*, 165-8.

creation of the world, alimentary laws are given after the flood, circumcision is as old as Abraham, the Passover is linked to the exodus and the sacrificial cult was already founded during the wilderness wanderings. In addition, since the monarchy and the state are shown to be less important than the mythical origins, the loss of political autonomy becomes easier to accept. For the priestly class, the most essential issue is sacral tradition, as well as the autonomy of the local cult.<sup>156</sup> More precisely, the collapse of the Judean monarchy does not really affect the veneration of Yahweh, as long as the mythical foundations can be established and maintained.

Last but not least, the position of high officials can be summed up as the so-called “mandarin attitude,” which tries to understand the new situation and to make do with it in order to maintain their former privileges. The biblical candidate for the “mandarin attitude” is the Deuteronomistic school of the Neo-Babylonian period. For those Deuteronomists, the exile has to be explained, namely how to reconcile these events with the nationalistic ideology of the first Deuteronomistic writing from the end of the seventh century BCE?<sup>157</sup> In order to resolve the dilemma, the Deuteronomists rework older scrolls from Assyrian times and establish a coherent history, which spans Israel’s history from the beginnings under Moses until the destruction of Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 1-2 Kings 25).<sup>158</sup> By way of the construction

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<sup>156</sup> Similar to the emphasis of the Persians right, as a matter of fact, it was the basic principle of Persian imperial policy to show respect for the various regions and their idiosyncrasies. Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 116.

<sup>157</sup> The first Deuteronomistic writing, namely, the Deuteronomic law code of the seventh century, can be understood as a program for the reorganization of the Judean state in order to centralize cult, power and taxes in Jerusalem. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 54. When it comes to the identity of the Deuteronomists, they should be located among the high officials of Jerusalem, probably among the scribes, even if one should not exclude that officials from other groups did support their political and ideological views. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 46.

<sup>158</sup> According to Noth, the coherent history is separated into different periods, that is, Moses, conquest, Judges, the rise of monarchy, the two kingdoms, and the history of Judah from after the fall of Samaria until the fall of Jerusalem. However, the very common idea that copying included a slavish conservation of the older texts does not apply to scribal practices in antiquity. Rather, they maintained a quite free attitude towards the older texts. Römer and De Pury, “Deuteronomistic Historiography (DH),” 100.

of a coherent history, all the negative events could be presented as logic consequences of the disobedience of the people and its leaders to the will of Yahweh. Even the will of Yahweh, which contains the original covenant between Yahweh and Israel, is recalled in the rewriting of the book of Deuteronomy. Accordingly, it is reasonable for the Deuteronomists to explain the collapse of the Judean monarchy as a result of a punishment enforced by Yahweh, who provokes the invasion of the Neo-Babylonians.<sup>159</sup> However, it does not necessarily mean that the Deuteronomists aim to reveal a clear monotheistic theology in the way that Second Isaiah does. Rather, their concern is only the expression of the superiority of Yahweh and, more importantly, the construction of a comprehensive past which could be utilized to explain the present.

All in all, different statuses and situations lead to different convictions and attitudes. The prophet who stays on the social margins maintains a slim hope for a utopian future. The priest, as the representative of former power, insists on tradition and manages to return to the mythical origins. The mandarin, belonging to the high officials and bureaucrats, tries to objectivize the crisis by the construction of a comprehensive history, which provides the reasons for the difficult past. In the next paragraph, attention will be paid to the last of these roles as well as to the important work, the exilic edition of the Deuteronomistic History, which is the first attempt to create a comprehensive history of Israel and Judah.

### **3.4.2 The exilic edition of the Deuteronomistic History**

In terms of the social and economic conditions of the deportees, although the related information is limited, it has been argued that high court officials were

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<sup>159</sup> Like Second Isaiah, the Deuteronomists tried to counter the idea that Marduk and the other Babylonian deities had defeated Yahweh.

probably well treated and even involved in the Babylonian administration of the exile.<sup>160</sup> In fact, the prosperity and relatively high standard of living in the Neo-Babylonian Empire in general clearly indicate that Babylonia was not likely to be left for the harsh reality of Judah, but rather to be seen as a land of opportunity. Those high court officials might therefore have found the same employment in the Babylonian palace and temple, continuing their same life work but for a different employer. Moreover, they could easily have rewritten and brought with them the scrolls due to the relaxed policy and administration of the Neo-Babylonians.<sup>161</sup> It is noteworthy that not only the past views of the Judean monarchy were modified significantly to fit in with the actual circumstances, but also the previous literary works of their predecessors from the Neo-Assyrian time were re-edited entirely. A summary of the structure of the Deuteronomistic History is schematically represented below:<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> J.L. Berquist, *Judaism in Persia's Shadow: A Social and Historical Approach* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 16.

<sup>161</sup> The fact that the final chapters of the Deuteronomistic History do not contain any negative statements about the Babylonian king and his army who are presented as executors of Yahweh's anger fits well with the feature of the exilic Deuteronomists in Babylonia. About the settling situation of the Babylonian Golah, see Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 100-2.

<sup>162</sup> Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 122-23.

Deut. 1-30	Moses' farewell speech: criteria to evaluate the following history <u>Announcement of the exile</u>	Origins
Josh. 1	Yahweh's speech to Joshua <u>Announcement of the conquest</u>	Conquest
Josh. 23	Joshua's farewell speech: accomplishment of the conquest <u>Announcement of the exile</u>	
Judg. 2.6-3.6	Discourse introducing the time of the Judges	The Time of Judges
1 Sam. 12	Samuel's farewell speech: summary of the foregoing history <u>Announcement of divine sanction</u>	The United Monarchy
1 Kgs. 8	Solomon's inauguration speech: fulfillment of promises to David <u>Announcement of the exile</u>	The Two Kingdoms
2 Kgs. 17	Discourse: comment on the collapse of Israel Summary of the foregoing history <u>Announcement of Judah's exile</u>	The Last Days of Judah
2 Kgs. 25	Open end: exile	

According to the diagram, there are several Deuteronomistic speeches, as already observed by Noth, which form the pillars that organize the Deuteronomistic History into different periods: Deuteronomy 1-30; Joshua 1.1-9; Joshua 23; Judges 2. 6- 3.6; 1 Samuel 12.1-15; 1 Kings 8 and 2 Kings 17. It is significant to note that the

Deuteronomic law functions now as criterion which assists in explaining the following history from the conquest to the loss of the land.<sup>163</sup> Moreover, the criteria is also an important factor contributing to the Deuteronomistic History maintaining the assertion that the end of the monarchy, the destruction of Jerusalem and the loss of the land result from Israelite disobedience and Yahweh's anger.

Besides, the "open end" of the Deuteronomistic History is another noteworthy point, by which the attitude of the Deuteronomists under the Babylonian sovereignty is exposed. Presumably, they opted for an "open end" of their history for the following reasons:<sup>164</sup>

1. It was difficult to provide a detailed explanation for the end of the Judean kingdom so shortly after the positive account of Josiah's reform.
2. They probably were not sure how to evaluate the chances for the restoration of the Davidic dynasty and how to look at the future. Perhaps there were even conflicting views about the future of the monarch perhaps.
3. By ending the story with 2 Kings 25. 21: "and all Judah was deported away from her land," they made out of the exile the matrix of an identity for the true Israel.

Obviously, the Deuteronomistic attitude was ambivalent. The impact coming from the deportation and the concrete feeling emerging from the Babylonian milieu made it more difficult to give a reasonable explanation and evaluation. The fact that the final chapters of the Deuteronomistic History do not contain any negative statements about

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<sup>163</sup> The Deuteronomic law is often mentioned for its insistence on cult centralization and exclusive worship of Yahweh. Andrew D. H. Mayes, "Deuteronomistic Ideology and the Theology of the Old Testament," in *Israel Constructs its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research*, eds Albert de Pury, Thomas Römer, and Jean-Daniel Macchi (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 469.

<sup>164</sup> Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 122.



the Babylonian king and his army, unlike the opposite attitude of Isaiah 13-14, could be another good example of this. Interestingly, the ambivalence of the Deuteronomists seems to appear on the subject of monarchy as well.

As we have mentioned, the Deuteronomic law functions as criterion which assists in explaining the following history, the so-called “law of the king” in Deuteronomy 17 is therefore not meant to prescribe how to choose the best king. Rather, it manifests the ambiguous Deuteronomistic attitude towards the royal institution and coincides with the stories about the rise of the monarchy, especially the narrative of 1 Samuel 8-12.<sup>165</sup> As early as the campaign against the Midianites, the Israelites had already asked Gideon to establish a dynasty of governors, but Gideon declines the suggestion and says: “I will not rule over you and my son will not rule over you; Yahweh will rule over you” (Judges 8.22-23). This topic that “Yahweh will rule over you” reappears clearly in 1 Samuel 8 and 12, where human kingship is seen very negatively and becomes a rejection of Yahweh’s kingship.<sup>166</sup> This perspective probably implies that the Babylonian and Persian Kings are both Yahweh’s tools and therefore the exile is manifested as an exhibition of Yahweh’s real sovereignty.

Nevertheless, 1 Samuel 9.1-10.16 and 11 seem to present another story. 1 Samuel 9.1-10.16 considers that the initiative for a human king comes from Yahweh himself and 1 Samuel 11 explains Saul’s rise to kingship in an entirely positive way by his victory against the Ammonite king. In short, the positive versions, which probably belong to the Josianic edition, are quite different from the critical one. If 1 Samuel 8-12 is taken as a whole, therefore, as Römer suggests, it is easy to find that the positive stories about Saul’s rise to monarchy (1 Samuel 9.1-10.16 and 11) are framed

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<sup>165</sup> According to Römer, Deut. 17. 14-20 should be regarded as a table of contents of the accounts about monarchy in Judges, Samuel and Kings. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 139.

<sup>166</sup> Noth deems that the people’s demand for a human king could be regarded as, according to Dtr., a sort of climax of the moral decline. Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, 80.

by negative considerations about kingship (1 Samuel 8 and 12) and the middle story contains both negative and positive statements (1 Samuel 10.17-27).<sup>167</sup> In other words, this kind of arrangement conveys an ambiguous attitude to the institution of monarchy, which apparently corresponds to the “Mandarin” attitude of the exilic Deuteronomists. Overall, in terms of the former Judean monarchy, the Deuteronomists of the Neo-Babylonian period were no longer supporting the institution unconditionally. Nevertheless, it does not mean that they had a clear position as to the future of the monarchy at that time. Rather, they wanted to leave different options open.

### 3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the nature of biblical writing in ancient Israel and the socio-historical analysis of the relations between the Neo-Babylonian Empire and Judah in the exilic period have been presented. In terms of biblical writing, it should be regarded as a kind of conscious writing which aims to interpret historical incidents and construct specific ideologies. On the basis of this approach, the conventional understanding of the so-called “exile” might be a popular misconception, that is, the very sharp distinction of the social situation in Judah made between before and after 586 BCE is inappropriate, and the description of entire destruction in Judah is also problematic and ought to be viewed as an ideological historical construction. To put it precisely, the exilic elite groups constructed a comprehensive history, namely the Deuteronomistic History, in order to provide the reasons for the difficult past. However, according to the textual arrangement of 1 Samuel 8-12, the Deuteronomistic attitude to the institution of monarchy seems to be ambiguous. If the text is a

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<sup>167</sup> Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 142-43.

production of a specific, ideologically charged historical world that reproduces a particular ideology with an internal logic of its own, as was mentioned above, it is necessary to rethink and reassess the text's reproduction of ideology in the text's rhetoric. Hence, the research should now proceed to the intrinsic analysis in the next chapter, which will make use of the literary-critical method to determine how the text encodes in its rhetoric the oftentimes conflicting circumstances of its ideological production.

## **CHAPTER 4**

# **HOW CAN THIS MAN SAVE US? AN EXPLORATION OF CONFLICT AESTHETICS**

### **4.1 GENERAL**

After discussing the material and ideological conditions by which the Deuteronomistic History was produced, namely the extrinsic analysis of 1 Samuel 8 – 12, attention in this part will be given to the text's reproduction of ideology in the text's rhetoric. More specifically, the research will now proceed to the intrinsic analysis, which requires an in-depth investigation of rhetoric since the text itself has a skilful ability to persuade its audience to accept a specific ideology, with the text's rhetoric being displayed as a form of power. The narrative methodology<sup>168</sup>, especially the analysis of conflict plot<sup>169</sup>, will therefore be chosen to explore how the text encodes in its ideological production.

### **4.2. Conflict Plot as a Way to Understand 1 Samuel 8–12**

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<sup>168</sup> For the discussion of narrative methodology see chapter 1 and 2.

<sup>169</sup> In terms of narrative methodology, conflict, which may be internal to a character or an external one, might be defined broadly as a clash of actions, ideas, desires, or wells. To analyze such events and determine the manner in which they are developed and resolved is an important approach to comprehend the conflict plot. Laurence Perrine, *Story and Structure* (New York: Harcourt, 1974), 44. Cf. Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 43; D. M. Gunn. and D. N. Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford, 1993), 102.

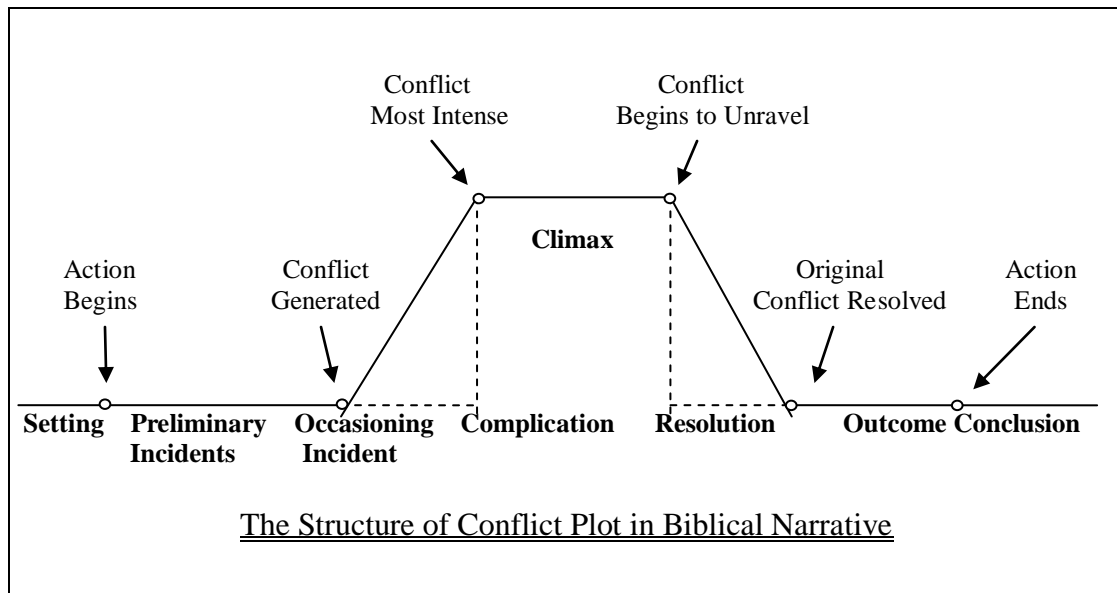
Generally speaking, conflict is often regarded as at the heart of most stories and may occur at various levels. “Most common, perhaps, is conflict between characters, which can usually be defined in terms of inconsistent point of view or incompatible character traits.”<sup>170</sup> By arranging tension, suspense, and struggle on the part of the character, stories would not only be a sequence of events strung together but express a vivid and attractive narrative art. Moreover, the stories consisting of conflict plot will evidently reveal the kernel values and beliefs of a narrative, namely its embedded ideology.

In order to grasp the above-mentioned trait, it would be helpful to divide the whole narrative, 1 Samuel 8-12, into several stages in light of the theory of conflict plot: Preliminary Incidents (Samuel as Israel’s judge, Judges 2.11- 1 Samuel 8.1-3), Occasioning Incident (Request for a king, 1 Samuel 8.4-22), Complication (Saul chosen to be king, 1 Samuel 9-10), Climax (The proving of Saul, 1 Samuel 11), and Resolution (Samuel’s farewell speech, 1 Samuel 12), in total five acts. Consequently, the structure of the conflict plot in 1 Samuel 8-12 may be schematically represented as follows:<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Powell considers that the nature of conflict could also be understood in terms of threats that parties pose to each other. Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 42.

<sup>171</sup> Although there may be more than one conflict and more than one climax, as Gunn and Fewell have noted, it should suffice here to analyze the text of 1 Samuel 8-12 by means of a brief and broad model. Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, 102-4; Tremper Longman III, *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Academic Bookss, 1987), 92.



#### 4.2.1 Preliminary Incidents: Samuel as Israel's judge (Judges 2.11- 1 Samuel 8.1-3)

What would be the starting point to explore the story in 1 Samuel 8-12? Or, more precisely, what should be the base on which the reader could develop his reading? One of the logical starting points would be 1 Samuel 8, namely the beginning of 1 Samuel 8-12.<sup>172</sup> The beginning of the unit is usually considered to provide a brief sketch of the major issues of the whole narrative unit. It should be noted, however, that 1 Samuel 8-12 is part of the Deuteronomistic History as was mentioned above, and the canonical book divisions came so much later than the History itself that it is debatable whether one can develop a study of the Deuteronomistic History according to the canonical books.<sup>173</sup>

<sup>172</sup> Normally, the information included in the exposition at the beginning of the narrative often serves as a natural point of departure for the action itself. Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 116. Cf. Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 230.

<sup>173</sup> Although this chapter is based on a narrative approach, which regards the final form as its basic hypothesis and avoids to go into the world behind the text, it is necessary, for the purpose of our study, to be aware of the relationship between the text of 1 Samuel 8-12 and the Deuteronomistic History.

To overcome the dilemma, Jobling suggests an alternative approach.<sup>174</sup> On the basis of Noth's suggestion, he tries to define a helpful set of "books" included in the canonical ones, including a "book" that runs from Judges 2.11 through 1 Samuel 12 and another that extends from 1 Samuel 13 through 2 Samuel 7. The former one, Judges 2.11- 1 Samuel 12, is called "The Extended Book of Judges," and the latter one, 1 Samuel 13 through 2 Samuel 7, is named "The Book of the Everlasting Covenant." For the purpose of our studies, attention will be paid to the former one, which presents a sort of debate over the merits of governmental systems. More precisely, "The Extended Book of Judges" illustrates judgeship as a divine dispensation and as in some sense an ideal, explaining how it gave way to kingship. According to Jobling, these goals are pursued by two contradictory strategies: "From one point of view the book chronicles a fall from an ideal and tries to assign blame for this fall. From another it tries to persuade itself that there really was no fall, that kingship can be brought within the ideal."<sup>175</sup> In other words, the starting point to explore 1 Samuel 8-12 is not only 1 Samuel 8 but also "The Deuteronomistically Extended Book of Judges" (Judge 2.11-1 Samuel 12), which will supply valuable clues.

Based on this understanding of the starting point, the reader of v.1 will find that a new scene is introduced with a circumstantial clause: "And it happened when Samuel grew old that he set his sons up as judges for Israel." Attention is firstly drawn to Samuel's age which seems to imply a stage in the series of judges is on the point of ending and a new period will follow.<sup>176</sup> The assumption is that the new period will continue the institution of rule by judges which is programmatically inaugurated by

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<sup>174</sup> Jobling, *1 Samuel*, 29; also see Jobling, *The sense of Biblical Narrative*, 47-51.

<sup>175</sup> Jobling, *1 Samuel*, 43.

<sup>176</sup> For many stories that focus on individuals, birth marks the beginning, death marks the end. Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, 102.

Judge 2.11-19. Then the following cyclical scheme should be as follows:<sup>177</sup>

1. Israel falls into apostasy against Yahweh.
2. A foreign oppressor dominates Israel for a time.
3. Israel appeals to Yahweh.
4. Yahweh attends to the appeal and sends a judge to save Israel.
5. The judge defeats the oppressor.
6. During the judge's lifetime Israel remains faithful to Yahweh and is safe from external threat.

In light of the cyclical repetitions, which serve to draw the reader's attention to an important point, there is a reversal to apostasy and a new cycle begins after the judge's death. It seems plausible, nevertheless, that the description of v.1 does not entirely correspond to the theoretical scheme: "he (Samuel) set his sons up as judges for Israel." More specifically, Samuel attempts to inaugurate a kind of dynastic arrangement by setting his sons up as judges. This is a clear manifestation of the ambiguity of Samuel's role as a leader, namely as Israel's judge—including both judicial authority and the power of ad hoc political leader.<sup>178</sup> Samuel evidently breaks the rule that Yahweh chooses the major judges (just as happened earlier, when the commanders of the people of Gilead chose their own judge, Judges 10:18-11:11) and decides to follow a different procedure.

Jobling holds that it is likely that Samuel took this decision because the judge

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<sup>177</sup> Jobling, *1 Samuel*, 43-4.

<sup>178</sup> Robert Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 41. About the narrative strategy of ambiguity, see Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, 155-8.



theory contains no provision for continuity of leadership.<sup>179</sup> He finds that the issue of continuity also arises in another important way in the judge cycles themselves as follow:

Each judge through Gideon meets and defeats a single enemy, of whom we then hear no more; but in the last two cycles (Jephtha and Samson) the Philistines emerge as oppressors who persist from cycle to cycle, whom neither judge fully overcomes. This continuity of threat perhaps calls for continuity in leadership.<sup>180</sup>

To put it in another way, the controversial issue here is probably not only the ambiguous role of judges but a serious difficulty of government institution in Israel, namely the judgeship. As a matter of fact, the information in the exposition, which is imported by the technique of “telling,” frequently serves to emphasize matters of importance or to hint at implied meanings in the narrative that follows.<sup>181</sup> For this reason, the implied author here, from a perspective of narrative methodology, might hint at something unexpected that will happen through the information in the exposition.

In addition, the narrative of Samuel’s two sons who betray their trust of office also emphasizes the coming unexpected story.<sup>182</sup> The noun **בַּצֵּעַ** used in v.3 refers to ill-gotten gain, and the verbal expression (**לָקַח, נָטָה**) in the same sentence suggests

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<sup>179</sup> Jobling deems that the issue of continuity is the most remarkable and problematic aspect of the judge theory. Jobling, *1 Samuel*, 45; see also: Jobling, *The sense of Biblical Narrative*, 52.

<sup>180</sup> Of course, this kind of speculation should be dealt earlier in the description of 1 Samuel 7.13. According to 7.13, the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel during all the days of Samuel. However, the central concern of the theory is the concept of continuity, which has become the core issue of contention in the debate over leadership that is going on in Judges. So important is this issue that the possibility is entertained, quite early in the judge cycles, of abandoning judgeship for kingship. Jobling, *1 Samuel*, 46.

<sup>181</sup> Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 117.

<sup>182</sup> In terms of reconstructing characters of narrative methodology, it is worth noting that the implied reader subconsciously formulates some idea of the kind of person playing out the story as all the text’s clues about the character are put together. Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, 75.

inappropriate influence. McCarter therefore considers the simple meaning is that the sons used their offices to enrich themselves.<sup>183</sup> Moreover, notice that the misdeeds committed by Samuel's sons are a nice parallel to Eli's two corrupt sons, except specific differences resultant from variations between the offices of priest and judge. Generally speaking, this kind of literary parallel is a conscious convention, which has been designated "type-scene."<sup>184</sup> There are certain prominent elements of similar compositional pattern in both stories, which are particularly important clues to stimulate the implied reader to predict the direction of the development of the plot.<sup>185</sup> In other words, as Eli's two sons were displaced by Samuel, who will be the one to replace Samuel's two sons or Samuel himself? Interestingly, this parallel also reveals a typical irony, dramatic irony.<sup>186</sup> Samuel replaced Eli's two sons, but now he himself stands in Eli's shoes. Samuel's selfish behavior, betraying the Lord, indirectly weakens his credit to be a man of God and at the same time becomes a particularly important variable in considering the coming development of conflict plot.

In short, vv.1-3 is presented as a summary which refers to instances when discourse time is briefer than story time.<sup>187</sup> The omniscient narrator uses the summary, including the potential problem of the judgeship and the complicated characterization, namely the probability of variation in the way Samuel is characterized, to imply an

<sup>183</sup> For this reason, McCarter suggests the translation as below: But his sons did not go his way: they turned aside after private gain, accepting bribes and subverting justice. P. Kyle McCarter *1 Samuel* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 156.

<sup>184</sup> For more discussion see Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 50.

<sup>185</sup> Variation in repetition is sometimes used to adumbrate a development of plot. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 100.

<sup>186</sup> This is a quite common skill to convey specific meaning. According to Bar-Efrat, dramatic irony "derives from the fact that the character knows less than the reader, or unknowingly does things which are not in his or her own best interests, or from the course of events leading to results which are the reverse of the character's aspirations." Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 125. Cf. Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, 74.

<sup>187</sup> When it comes to the distinction between story time and discourse time, story time refers to the order in which events are conceived to have occurred by the implied author in creating the world of the story, and discourse time refers to the order in which the events are described for the reader by the narrator. According to the definition made by Genette, "summary" is one of the five different ways in which the duration of discourse time may be related to that of story time. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 113-60. See also Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 36.

unexpected development of plot in the subsequent story. In other words, on the basis of “The Extended Book of Judges,” the summary helpfully provides the kernel questions which constitute the grounding of the tension in 1 Samuel 8-12 and simultaneously provokes the implied reader to inquire about the subsequent story.

#### **4.2.2 Occasioning Incident: Request for a King (1 Samuel 8.4-22)**

After the summary of the potential problem of the judgeship and the shape of Samuel’s characterization, the implied reader is told that all the elders of Israel assemble and come to Samuel at Ramah (v.4). It is noteworthy that, as Eslinger observed, their assembly before going to Samuel at Ramah has already manifested that they were united as a group with a singular purpose.<sup>188</sup> More precisely, they seek to request a new leader. This sets the scene for a conflict over leadership, as Samuel has already appointed his sons as leaders. According to the theory of conflict, in fact, conflict is at the centre of the plot and often occurs between two forces or two characters, which can usually be defined in terms of inconsistent point of view or incompatible character traits.<sup>189</sup> For this reason, the collision between the elders of Israel and Samuel, Yahweh’s mediator, might be regarded as the main Occasioning Incident, developing into a major conflict which gradually ascends to a climax. Before a detailed analysis of the conflict plot is attempted, however, attention should first be given to the compositional features of this chapter.

In considering the compositional issue, Polzin briefly points out three specific features of this chapter.<sup>190</sup> First, a lot of imperfective verb forms used by the implied author highlights what is actually happening in the chapter and his evaluative position

<sup>188</sup> Lyle Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1-12* (Sheffield: Almond, 1985), 255.

<sup>189</sup> Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 94.

<sup>190</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 82.

about the events.<sup>191</sup> The use of verb form, which is less direct, makes the implied reader's task to appreciate the implied author's fundamental ideological stance more challenging. For example, when the narrator uses the syntax that the people "were asking (הִשְׁאֲלִים) a king from him" (v.10), the implied reader should be able to recognize that the imperfective verb form, הִשְׁאֲלִים, manifests the contrast to the people's historiographic and idealized repentance in the previous chapter: "If you are returning (שָׁבוּ) to the Lord..." (7.3). Second, in the dialogue of this chapter, the implied reader is only given selective information of the direct words of its characters, that is, something within the story might be hidden. By the style of dialogue, in fact, attention is only paid to the words of God to Samuel and the words of Samuel to the people, and thus the implied reader has no idea of what Samuel specifically says to God. At the same time, due to the similar intentional shape of dialogue, the implied reader might also be uncertain about what else besides the מִשְׁפָּט Samuel told the people as he related to them "all the words of the Lord." Polzin asks, therefore, "Why does the narrator choose not to highlight this evaluation of the request for the people's benefit, but rather to have Samuel emphasize those aspects of the מִשְׁפָּט that would limit the freedoms now enjoyed by the people under their present judicial government?"<sup>192</sup> Obviously, the implied author has emphasized an ideological purpose by means of the narrative aesthetic. Third, the technique of repetition is cleverly utilized to reflect the implied authorial evaluation.<sup>193</sup> Polzin indicates the discourse pattern as follow:<sup>194</sup>

<sup>191</sup> Christo H.J. van der Merwe, Jackie A. Naudé and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 148.

<sup>192</sup> That is to say, why is the positive perspective of kingship not discussed? Why is the emphasis only laid on the negative one? Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 82.

<sup>193</sup> Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 100.

<sup>194</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 83.

**Exposition**

**Beginning of Event**

v. 1 When Samuel became old...

v. 4a “Behold you are old

v. 3 Yet his sons did not walk in his ways.

v. 4b and your sons do not walk in your ways.”

The nondirective narrative, in Polzin’s terminology, which is signaled by the redundant nature of the two central expository facts in verses 1 and 3, followed by the words of the elders in verse 4, becomes the occasion for Israel’s request of “a king to govern us like all the nations” (v.5). Although the narrator reveals no personal viewpoint as the events are described, his choice of using the reported words of God both to condemn the Israelites for their request and to authorize Samuel’s later actions in granting it has already exhibited his ideological evaluation.<sup>195</sup> Hence, it is necessary to assess the rhetoric of the narrative, which can be of enormous value to learn what the implied author yearns to convey, namely the implied authorial ideological construction.

From the aspect of discourse, which refers to the rhetoric of the narrative, namely how the story is told, it is worth noting that the dialogues between the elders of Israel and Samuel and between Samuel and the Lord comprise the events of this chapter, and its centerpiece is Samuel’s long description of the king’s **מִשְׁפָּט** in verses 10-18.<sup>196</sup> Eslinger suggests a structural illustration which constitutes a remarkable network of correspondences and reversals in the roles of speaker and addressee, as shown in the

<sup>195</sup> It is a characteristic of the biblical account to exhibit a strong aesthetic element. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 43.

<sup>196</sup> The advantage gained by presenting their addresses in direct speech is not only immediacy but also a certain complicating ambiguity. A report in the third person would take on some of the authoritativeness of the reliable narrator, whereas the direct dialogue will lead the implied reader to ponder the different possible connections between the spoken words and the actual feelings or intentions. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 67.

following.<sup>197</sup>

- A            People to Samuel: “give a king.” (v.4)
- B            Samuel to Yahweh: Prayer. (v.6)
- C            Yahweh to Samuel: “listen; the manner of the king.” (v.7-9)
- D            Samuel to people: the manner of the king. (v.10f)
- D’           People to Samuel: “No – give a king.” (v.19)
- C’           Samuel to Yahweh: reports people’s refusal. (v.21)
- B’           Yahweh to Samuel: “listen; make a king.” (v.22)
- A’           Samuel to people: “Go home.” (v.22)

Apparently, in terms of the centre of this balanced structure, the main opposition between two groups is not between the people and Yahweh but between Samuel and the people as already noted above. However, the inconclusive progression of the event is noteworthy: the story begins with the people’s double request of Samuel to give them a king (vv.4-6), and proceeds with God’s double command to him to do so (vv.7, 9), with Samuel’s long speech to dissuade them (vv.11-18), with the people’s refusal to be dissuaded with God’s response to their refusal—not just “listen to their voice,” but “listen to their voice and make them a king” (v.22a)—and ends with Samuel doing nothing except sending the people away (v.22b). From an angle of plot analysis, it seems to be the narrator’s expectance that the implied reader could develop a picture of a judge, namely Samuel, whose words and inaction show him to be obstructive in a

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<sup>197</sup> For this illustration, I make some amendments to fit in with my analysis of the plot. Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis*, 258.

self-interested way. Let us, firstly, draw attention to the characterization of Samuel and then come back to Samuel's speech in vv.11-18.

V.4 mentions that the elders of Israel gather together to Samuel, seeking a remedy through a change of system, but Samuel is displeased, that is, "the thing was evil in the sight of Samuel" (וַיֵּרַע הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינֵי שְׁמוּאֵל). But why? The fact that he made his sons judges over Israel appears evidently he had already been aware of his own incapacity in the matter. Moreover, that the two sons did not go in his ways has appeared to cause a crisis of leadership. Why does he feel upset as the people's request coming to him? Does Samuel see in the request a rejection of himself and everything he has striven for?<sup>198</sup> Yahweh's response might be a hint: they have not rejected you (v.7, לֹא אָתָּרְךָ נִאָּסוּ).<sup>199</sup> In other words, Yahweh's word has indirectly suggested that Samuel's displeasure is probably on account of his own self-regard.<sup>200</sup> If so, it is open to suspicion whether Samuel was accurately reporting Yahweh's words when he delivered his warning to the people in vv.11-18.

Samuel's words to the people in vv.11-18 are frequently interpreted as a thumbnail sketch of the "greedy abuse of power" reflecting Israel's long and bitter experience with kingship.<sup>201</sup> Polzin, however, forcefully proposes a different reading. He argues that abusive royal actions is probably not the issue in the speech, neither does anything Samuel says to the people convict them of the idolatrous implications of their request or deal adequately with the standards of conduct future kings must

<sup>198</sup> Jobling, *1 Samuel*, 62.

<sup>199</sup> About the use of the specific word, נִאָּס (reject), Gunn provides a detailed discussion. David M. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul: An Interpretation of a Biblical Story* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), 60.

<sup>200</sup> Interestingly, Yahweh's response is also that of displeasure. In v.7, clearly his permission does not include his approval. He alone is "king" of Israel and to him the people's desire for an earthly king is a denigration of his own kingship: he likens the action to the disloyalty of the people in former times "forsaking me and serving other gods" (וַיַּעֲזֹבֵנִי וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים). Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, 59.

Cf. McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 157.

<sup>201</sup> McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 161-2.

follow. Rather, of key importance here is that Samuel only pays attention to the negative part of monarchy, namely, how restrictive the people's life will become under the monarchy.<sup>202</sup> In fact, although the specific term, מִשְׁפָּט, used to define Samuel's speech in v. 9, has wide range of possible meanings,<sup>203</sup> with respect to the monarchic contexts of this word, both the rights and duties of the king appear to be what Samuel would have "written in a book and laid before the Lord" (10.25). To put it briefly, מִשְׁפָּט does not mean the law of the king here, but the way he will exercise his authority as a king. On the basis of this point of view, Samuel might be "interpreting" to his own advantage, for Yahweh would probably not be so inconsistent as to warn the people of the consequences of their request after he has decided to grant it.<sup>204</sup> And that is the problem with Samuel's speech.

Besides, Samuel's decision at the end of the chapter to do nothing but send the people home is in sharp contrast to the force of the progressive buildup of pressure on Samuel to act, such as the people saying to Samuel, "Appoint for us a king" (v.5), "Give us a king" (v.6), and "We will have a king" (v.19), or God commanding Samuel, "Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to you" (v.7), "Hearken to their voice" (v.9)<sup>205</sup>, and "Hearken to their voice and make them a king" (v.22).<sup>206</sup> Moreover, it is Samuel who deliberately postpones the people's request by describing the king' מִשְׁפָּט (vv.11-18) since the people are reported as understanding Samuel's

<sup>202</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 85.

<sup>203</sup> According to Polzin, the meaning of מִשְׁפָּט throughout the Bible extends from its very weak and rare use for something like "appearance" (2Kings 1:7), to stronger legal usages like "custom or manner of acting" (Judg. 18:7), up to its strongest sense of divinely decreed regulations involving primogeniture (Deut. 21:17) or the powers of judges (Judg. 13:12), priests (Deut. 18:3; 1 Sam. 2:13), or king (1 Sam. 8:8,11,10:25). Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 86.

<sup>204</sup> Polzin deems that it is difficult to separate the Lord's original words from Samuel's report and interpretation. Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 87.

<sup>205</sup> V.9 Hebrew אֵין כִּי־הָעָד תַּעֲדִיר בָּהֶם is formal legal language. The force of the unique אֵין (yet only, except that) is restrictive. McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 157.

<sup>206</sup> Indeed, it is the way that the narrator confirms the implied reader's suspicions about Samuel's inner motivation by having him send the people away. Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 84.



words to be an attempt at dissuading them: “No! But we will have a king over us” (v.19, *לֹא כִּי אֶם-מֶלֶךְ יִהְיֶה עָלֵינוּ*).<sup>207</sup> Afterward, when Samuel returns and repeats the people’s words “in the ears of the Lord” (v.21), his artificial act of telling God what he obviously already knows also seems to be a childish attempt to give God an opportunity to change his mind about the monarchy. In short, Samuel takes the people’s request as a personal affront and thus ignores the pressure from both people and Yahweh on purpose.

All in all, since Samuel’s motivation is clearly self-interested, attention should be turned to Yahweh who has rich love for Israel. As an important character, God comes across as predominantly disinterested and remarkably magnanimous: “Listen to their voice and set a king over them.” God’s decision makes kingship’s potentially idolatrous nature rhetorically irrelevant for Samuel’s dissuasive purpose.<sup>208</sup> In this way, the narrator paints the picture of a God who reveals his love in spite of being rejected, in contrast to a judge who fails to conceal his reluctance to become the maker of kings.<sup>209</sup> In the next unit, God will have to initiate the movement toward kingship as a result of Samuel’s reluctance.

### 4.2.3 Complication: Saul Chosen to be King (1 Samuel 9-10)

Chapter 9-10 should be regarded as the Complication section of the conflict plot,

<sup>207</sup> Miscall mentions a significant issue. When it comes to the sentence, “You will cry out in that day because of the king whom you have chosen for your selves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day” (1 Sam. 8: 18), it seems to be a threat of Samuel. Peter D. Miscall, *1 Samuel* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1986), 49.

<sup>208</sup> Hence, as Gunn has pointed, chapter 8 presents us with two figures whose potential for influencing future events is clearly great. But what is the spirit of this compromise? Is it open-hearted generosity? Simple resignation? Or, is it a concession which conceals a deep-seated conviction that the wrongness of the people’s request will inevitably become manifest, as if to say, “Hearken to their voice, and make them a king—and let us see what shall see”? Is the instruction to “obey the people” an ironical one? In any case, we have been warned against expecting the forthcoming experiment in kingship to be an unmitigated success, and that would become the essential clue for the subsequent narrative. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, 60.

<sup>209</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 88.

which starts the complex procedure of the establishment of kingship in Israel. As early as chapter 8, in fact, an inconclusive element of establishment of the kingship has been introduced by means of the characterization of Samuel. Samuel, as an essential judge and man of God, not only was displeased at the people's request to have a king, but also rejected their request with a tone of threat (8.18), although, significantly, his authority was both recognized and undermined by both the people and the Lord simultaneously. Hence, in the face of this deadlock, God, who acts as predominant character, decides to proceed with the establishment of kingship by introducing a new character into the story, namely Saul (9.16).

Although the narrative pattern used to describe Saul's appearance is quite similar to that used at the beginning of Hannah's story in 1.1-2, it seems to be an accidental event in the eyes of the implied reader.<sup>210</sup> On the one hand, this accidental event opens with a formulaic phrasing, *וַיְהִי־אִישׁ* (there was a man), followed by name, home region, and genealogy, which signals a discrete new story within the large narrative.<sup>211</sup> On the other hand, "telling," a technique which employs the voice of a reliable narrator to speak directly to the implied reader is utilized to introduce Saul (vv.1-3).<sup>212</sup> In terms of the introduction, Saul's excellent background and good looks seems to be an outward token of his capacity for leadership; nevertheless, this description is too perfect to fit the Old Testament pattern for deliverances or heroes, which usually present the leader as somehow unfit for leadership or at least as an unpromising

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<sup>210</sup> Eslinger provides a detailed illustration to explain the correspondences and differences between the Samuel cycle and Saul cycle. Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis*, 286.

<sup>211</sup> Alter, *The David Story*, 46.

<sup>212</sup> Compared with Saul, Samuel is almost exclusively introduced by "showing," which employs statements that present either his own perspective or the point of view of other characters concerning him. Basically, the technique of showing is less precise than that of telling but it is usually more interesting. The implied reader must work harder to collect data from various sources and evaluate it in order to figure out the implied author's view of the characters. In fact, that is exactly what we had done to figure out Samuel's point of view in chapter 8. Powell. *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 52.

candidate, such as David or Samson.<sup>213</sup> Stated another way, this kind of characterization, as in the case of Saul's initial appearance, can be seen as a hint foreshadowing later developments in the story.

Saul, as a man of wealth, goes out and looks for his father's donkeys (v.4). This tiny accidental loss of some donkeys becomes the occasion for a journey by Saul to find them and thereby meet Samuel. When Saul cannot find the donkeys and considers whether he should go back for his father's well-being, Saul's servant mentions the man of God: "Whatever he says always comes true...perhaps he will declare to us the path upon which we have set out" (v.6). Note the appearance of the specific character by which Samuel is characterized, that is, prophet or seer.<sup>214</sup> Does a prophet or a seer, however, have anything to do with the coming kingship? If any, what kind of relationship do they have? And, how is such a relationship involved into the story? As Yahweh decided to allow Israel its request, it is imperative to have the divine ground rules, מִשְׁפַּט הַמֶּלֶךְ, according to which the king will rule. For this reason, Chapter 9 provides an explanation of how the Lord introduces Saul to the very prophet who is to keep the kingship in check. Several dialogues are therefore employed to enlarge upon and refine this intention.<sup>215</sup>

The first dialogue, which is a carefully crafted introduction to the narrator's main ideological concerns, begins with the conversation between Saul and his servant (vv.5-10).<sup>216</sup> Verse 6 offers an important hint about the servant's speech which contains some elements found in prophetic speech such as הִנֵּה (look) and עַתָּה (now).

<sup>213</sup> Miscall, *1 Samuel*, 52.

<sup>214</sup> The narrative background to this portrait of the prophet is Deuteronomy 13 and 18 where a prophet is distinguished by his true prophecy. Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 89.

<sup>215</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 92.

<sup>216</sup> The dialogue as well as other subsequent dialogues is to show how a character's question generates a predictive response which not only comes true but successively increases the magnitude of its predictive power. Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 92.

By means of the terminologies, the narrator implies that the lad is not speaking as a prophet but of a prophet, and thus the attention is drawn to the contrast between obviously nonprophetic predictions and the prophetic predictions. In other words, the kernel question is: what makes a prophet's word different? It is, as a matter of fact, the most important point according to which the entire account in this part has been constructed.

Since each encounter shows how a character's question generates a predictive response, it is Saul who is reported as the one to inquire: But behold if we go, what can we bring the man (v.7, וְהִנֵּה גֵלְךָ וּמַה־נָּבִיא לְאִישׁ)? For this question, Polzin suggests a helpful further analysis.<sup>217</sup> He holds that this question has been critically significant in laying the groundwork for understanding how wordplay is utilized to give a particular implication. In terms of surface dialogue, the obvious import is what the servant answers in context, namely to bring a present to the man of God. Nevertheless, the phrase could also mean in different context: ...what is a prophet for a man (לְאִישׁ וְהִנֵּה גֵלְךָ וּמַה־נָּבִיא)? In connecting this opening question to the narrator's later statement in v.9: "he who is today called a prophet (נָבִיא) was formerly called a seer (רֹאֶה)," the attention is thus focused on what Saul's journey to Samuel is all about: the מִשְׁפָּט הַמֶּלֶךְ, the rights and duties of the king might involve the מִשְׁפָּט הַנָּבִיא, the rights and duties of the prophet.

When they go up the hill to the town, they are meeting some girl coming out to draw water and consequently have the second dialogue (vv.11-14). Alter calls the meeting a truncated "type-scene of annunciation" which is in all likelihood a clue to its meaning.<sup>218</sup> Although the function of the meeting is clearly to develop the plot, as

<sup>217</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 93. Cf. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 95.

<sup>218</sup> Alter deems that the encounter between a young man in foreign territory and young women drawing water seems to signal the beginning of a betrothal type-scene. However, that the betrothal

in the case of those dialogues that precede and follow it, the breathless, garrulous response from the young women to the two men gives an essential implication which is almost more than they care to know. According to Alter, that is the Hebrew writer's "technique of contrastive dialogue" and he is quick to point out that these predictions are immediately fulfilled (vv.13-14).<sup>219</sup> In short, it explains how the nonprophetic predictions of the servant and the women in the first two dialogues differ fundamentally from the authentically prophetic statements of God, the narrator, and Samuel found in the other dialogues in the chapter.<sup>220</sup> Hence, the narrator, who knows everything, now begins to represent authentic prophetic speech.

In light of the narrator's angle, the message from Yahweh to Samuel in vv.15-17 is the third dialogue, which should be regarded as the expository basis for the prophetic promise and predictions Samuel makes to Saul in the dialogue to follow. To put it precisely, the statement from Yahweh revealing what will happen is intrinsically different from the human predictions. Yahweh's word not only establishes the prophetic words of Samuel to Saul, but also sets out the boundaries of Saul's future actions which are in contrast to that of Samuel's previous words in chapter 8. Whereas Samuel had subversively emphasized to the people only the privilege and the negative aspects of the king, Yahweh himself balances the constraint with a positive perspective and the office's promise: you shall anoint him prince (נָגִיד)<sup>221</sup> over my people Israel and he shall deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines (v.16).

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scene is aborted might influence the development of the main plot and probably lead to grimmer consequences. Alter, *The David Story*, 48. See also Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 60-1.

<sup>219</sup> Alter, *The David Story*, 49.

<sup>220</sup> Polzin indicates that "something more is necessary for a true prophet than simply predicting the future." Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 94.

<sup>221</sup> It is worth noting that the Hebrew, נָגִיד, is a term that suggests the exercise of political power in a designated role of leadership rather than in the manner of the ad hoc charismatic leadership. However, according to Alter, God sedulously does not use the word "king," מֶלֶךְ, in order to keep with the transitional moment and perhaps to retard Samuel's keen resentment of the monarchy. Alter, *The David Story*, 49.

The fourth dialogue, between Samuel and Saul (vv.18-21), follows the contrastive nature established in the former sections and goes further to concentrate on the implication of Samuel's predictive powers. Some Israelites, like Samuel's servant or those girls coming out to draw water, regard Samuel as the powerful prophet with miraculous predictive ability, whereas the implied reader who understands the specific characterization in the third dialogue is aware of the seer needing constantly to be led by God in an almost infantile way, representing an instance of a dramatic irony. Saul within the world of the narrative is therefore in a position to know for sure how extraordinary the prophet's knowledge is since the prophet probes his heart and he declares what is in it. (vv.19-20).<sup>222</sup> In addition, it must further be noted that Samuel's question itself in v.20 also carries a double meaning in the light of chapter 8. On the one hand, the term, *חֲמֹדָה* (desire), used by Samuel means Israel's request for a king, but on the other hand, it ironically implies that Israel's request is an idolatrous tendency because of the term's pragmatic, which is usually utilized of a wicked implication.<sup>223</sup> The following scene of Saul's visit with Samuel and their leaving the city together, which is described in detail in vv.22-27, might be seen as a preparation for the secret anointing of Saul.<sup>224</sup> In fact, in biblical narrative the reception of a divine call to office is usually depicted as a thoroughly private experience<sup>225</sup>, and the case of Saul is no exception. He not only receives his consecration in private: the servant is sent ahead (9.27), leaving Saul alone with Samuel, but also avoids public discourse on the matter of the kingdom, concealing his new status even from his family (10.16).

The dialogue in 10.1-8, apart from the secret anointing of Saul following on the

<sup>222</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 95.

<sup>223</sup> Good, *Irony in the Old Testament*, 62.

<sup>224</sup> McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 187.

<sup>225</sup> For instance, Moses' calling is a private experience.

plot development of Chapter 9, functions to raise the tension. Chapter 10's opening dialogue, although it almost appears to be Samuel's monologue, begins with the series of questions that Saul addresses to Samuel in 9.21, continuing to invoke a crucial problem following the previous sections: what is to be the accurate relationship between prophet and נָגִיד (prince, the title used by Yahweh)? Polzin finds that since 10.1-8 shows the prophet in his predictive and commanding roles with reference to Israel's first king, it will contribute to the question below: "May not Israel's king be Israel's prophet also?"<sup>226</sup> In other words, the conflict between Saul being commanded to do whatever he see fit to do (v.7), but also having to wait until Samuel comes and shows him what to do (v.8) calls attention to the dilemma of the relationship between the king and the prophet, namely how does the מְשַׁפֵּט הַמֶּלֶךְ relate to the מְשַׁפֵּט הַנָּבִיא? The question seems to take central stage in the story, and becomes the key point to understanding the implied author's ideological point of view.

Following this line of thought, we may ask: Who is probably the one manipulating events from behind the scenes? In light of verses 9 and 10, it is clear that the conflict between the מְשַׁפֵּט הַמֶּלֶךְ and the מְשַׁפֵּט הַנָּבִיא is the result of the action of God himself. According to Alter, the statement "God gave him another heart and all these signs came to pass" (v.9, וַיִּהְיֶה לּוֹ אֱלֹהִים לֵב אֲחֵר וַיִּבְאֹר כָּל־הָאֲתֹת הָאֵלֶּה), should be seen as a kind of proleptic note for the narrative report that follows.<sup>227</sup> That is to say, no matter how complicated the relationship between the מְשַׁפֵּט הַמֶּלֶךְ and the מְשַׁפֵּט הַנָּבִיא is, it is God who brings it about. Indeed, the most enigmatic and unpredictable character is Yahweh himself, who resists human attempts to fence him in,<sup>228</sup> and it

<sup>226</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 99.

<sup>227</sup> Alter, *The David Story*, 55.

<sup>228</sup> In biblical literature, humans continually strive to put a fence around the words and actions of God in an effort to tame them, but they somehow resist such domestication. Similarly, the spirit of God, which comes so mightily upon Saul in 10.10, remains elusive to the implied reader, just beyond his grasp. Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 101. Cf. Jobling, *1 Samuel*, 75.

seems necessary to observe Yahweh's intentions by means of the narrative analysis of characterization, especially of Saul and of Samuel. If verses 1-8 show Samuel in prophetic action and verses 9-13 have Saul join him in this activity, thus causing the people's wonderment at this turn of affairs, verses 14-16 surround Saul with a prophetic aura. Here the terminology, declare (הִגִּידָה, 10.15), used by Saul clothes him with both royal and prophetic garb.<sup>229</sup> It thematically compares his prophetic declarations with Samuel's and at the same time calls fresh attention to him as the newly anointed prince (נָבִיד). In this way, prophet and king are both etymologically and ideologically intertwined.

Now, the people are gathered at Mizpah for the selection of a king (vv.17-27). This moment might be seen as the culminating point of the stage of Complication. After Samuel's speech, which still reiterates the apostasy of establishing a new kingship instead of the Lord who rescued Israel from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing them, a ceremony of drawing lots takes place. However, though the lot has fallen on Saul, he is nowhere to be found, that is, the man of the hour is hidden among the baggage (v.22). Good believes that the detail makes no sense except in the light of the previous narrative with Samuel, as Saul was told he would be king.<sup>230</sup> But, from the perspective of characterization, the incident indicates strongly that Saul does not want to be king and must be dragged out of hiding for it.<sup>231</sup> Saul's reluctance and Samuel's repetitive rhetoric surely underline the dubiousness of the choice of Saul, to be the new king. How about the people? Although "all the people" (כָּל-הָעָם) shout, long live the king (v.24, יֵחִי הַמֶּלֶךְ), there are some worthless men who articulate the question: "How will this one deliver us?" (v.27, מִה-יִשְׁעֵנוּ יֵה) This touch, evidently,

<sup>229</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 100.

<sup>230</sup> Good, *Irony in the Old Testament*, 63.

<sup>231</sup> The detail is virtually a parody of the recurring motif of the prophet-leaders unwillingness to accept his mission. Now confronted by the assembled tribes and trapped by the process of lot drawing, he tries to flee the onus of kingship, farcically hiding in the baggage. Alter, *The David Story*, 58.



has its own irony and specific meaning connected to the next chapter.

#### 4.2.4 Climax: The Proving of Saul (1 Samuel 11)

The final scene of chapter 10 closes on an inconclusive note: How will this one deliver us (מִדֶּם-יִשְׁעֵנוּ יְהוָה)? The doubts expressed by some worthless men point out that Saul's abilities had not been proven in spite of the fact that Saul was the manifest choice of Yahweh, as indicated by the narrator. In light of the plot development, 1 Samuel 11:1-11 might be regarded as a demonstration of the new king's ability. More specifically, although the opening scene in verse 1, which is made by the introduction of a new character, Nahash, and a new setting, the location at Jabesh-Gilead, stands in strange isolation from its context, both preceding and succeeding, it has been creatively described in terms of its literary dynamics.<sup>232</sup> With the change of scene, the narrator goes back to an earlier point in time and traces the course of action up to a crucial moment where the hero is introduced and allowed to demonstrate his prowess in the opportunity afforded to him.<sup>233</sup> In other words, the new scene which marks the inception of Saul's military activity should be regarded as a succeeding story continuing the former narrative and, at the same time, serving the particular purpose of consolidating Saul's position.

As in the narrative of Judges, the Israelites are faced with a foreign oppressor. He is threatening to gouge out everyone's right eye, thereby intending to "put disgrace upon all Israel" (v.2, וְשִׁמְתִּיהָ חֲרָפָה עַל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל). The elders of Jabesh request time to muster sufficient opposition: "Let us alone for seven days, that we may send messengers through all the territory of Israel, and if there is none to deliver us, we

<sup>232</sup> M. Buber, *Die Erzählung von Sauls Königswahl*, *Vetus Testamentum* 6: 1956, 150. Cited by Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis*, 360.

<sup>233</sup> Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis*, 360.

shall come out to you” (v.3). Obviously, what gives a specific seal of approval to Saul’s exploit is that not only was a town in Israel threatened with cruelly brutal treatment, but the disgrace was explicitly extended to all Israel (חֲרַפָּה עַל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל) (ושְׁמִתִּיהָ).<sup>234</sup> Campbell considers that “the concession of seven days respite, granted to the besieged citizens in order to summon help, is a narratively powerful expression of the contempt in which Nahash held Israel.”<sup>235</sup> In any case, the messengers are to be sent through all the territory of Israel, including Gibeah of Saul (v.4).

When the men of Jabesh-Gilead inform Nahash that they would search through all the territory of Israel, they perhaps know something he does not, that is, Israel already has a tribally acclaimed ruler and military leader who resides in Gibeah though he has not yet begun to act.<sup>236</sup> At the same time, Nahash hardly supposes that the disunited tribes will produce a deliverer, who is now coming from the field behind the oxen. Nevertheless, note that the description of Saul’s agricultural activity manifests the situation of the stalemate in Israel’s struggle for constitutional transformation. Although Yahweh may have assigned his own designate upon Israel as their king, they appear to have no idea how to exercise the new constitution.<sup>237</sup> No one informs Saul about the Ammonite threat so that he must ask to find out why the people are weeping (v.5, מַה-לָּעָם כִּי יִבְכּוּ).

When Saul hears the words of the inhabitants of Jabesh, the spirit of God comes

<sup>234</sup> Nahash’s seemingly surprising agreement to this condition is by no means a sign of generosity. Rather, from his perspective, it should be recognized as an additional opportunity to humiliate the Israelites. Alter, *The David Story*, 61.

<sup>235</sup> Antony F. Campbell, *1 Samuel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003), 116.

<sup>236</sup> Here, the filling of a gap, which utilizes the reading convention of the implied reader, allows for creative interpretations. It attempts to read the seemingly odd plot from a creative and comprehensive angle. On the one hand, this conviction overcomes the need to resort to the issue of redaction. On the other hand, the specific ideology underlying the plot can be displayed. For more discussion, see Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1974), 226. Cf. Alter, *The David Story*, 61.

<sup>237</sup> That is to say, Saul’s behavior is still like a judge though he has been chosen to be a king. Miscall, *1 Samuel*, 66.

upon him and thus reminds him of Samuel's instruction to do what comes to hand. He acts by giving an explicit command, reinforced by the dismemberment of the oxen (vv.6-7a). On the one hand, this act might be seen as a direct challenge to the people who refuse to recognize him;<sup>238</sup> on the other hand, the violent symbolism doubly distinguishes Saul from the model of the ad hoc warrior-leader in Judges.<sup>239</sup> Although the symbolism seems to be a repetition of the dismemberment of the concubine at the end of Judges 19, the attempt to analogize the violent symbolism is problematic, because the differences between the two incidents are even greater than the similarities.<sup>240</sup> This is the first explicit command that the new king has exercised, as well as the first actual trial of Israel's recognition of Saul's authority.

In light of this perspective, however, there is a main difficulty surrounding Saul's exhortation: Why do the people, who have ignored Saul's authority, now choose to obey him? Is it because of Samuel's influence (v.7, *וְאַחֲרַי שְׂאוּל וְאַחֲרַי שְׂמוּאֵל*)? Or because of the army, as the implied reader knows from 10.26? As a matter of fact, the careful implied reader will be aware that, apart from the threat expressed by Saul, attention should be paid to the narrator's explanation, intervening between the harsh exhortation and the positive response: the fear of Yahweh fell upon the people and they went out as one man (v.7b, *וַיִּפֹּל פֶּחַד־יְהוָה עַל־הָעָם וַיֵּצְאוּ כָאִישׁ אֶחָד*). In other words, Saul's prime source of authority is not Samuel or his army but Yahweh himself, namely a terrible fear of Yahweh (*פֶּחַד־יְהוָה*). The complex characterization of Saul greatly enhances the portrayed of the judicial deliverer of Israel, and the stalemate between the theocrat and the people seems to be over, though the recognition of Saul's

<sup>238</sup> As the divine spirit had seized him and caused him to prophesy at the time of his anointing, so now it emboldens him to make a challenge to all Israel to come to the help of the besieged city, though it appears to be necessary to add Samuel to his exhortation. Alter, *The David Story*, 62.

<sup>239</sup> The judges depended on volunteers and worked locally.

<sup>240</sup> Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis*, 367.

leadership is forced. Therefore, Israel goes out as one man, and, strategically, uses deceit to lull the besieging forces (vv.8-11). More to the point, a deliverer has emerged in Israel.

However, after the victory, a report of continuing dissidence about Saul's claim to the throne appears again, that is, the people demand the heads of the previous doubters (v.12). This unexpected incident, from the viewpoint of narrative art, might be regarded as an implicit answer to the ironic question of 10.27.<sup>241</sup> In 10.27, some had expressed serious misgivings about the establishment of a capable deliverer. Then in 11.1-5 there is apparent lack of recognition for Saul's leadership. But the victory of battle has proved Saul's authority and yielded positive results in their allegiance to the crown. To put it in another way, the rhetorical intent of the people's question "sets the stage for much that will follow."<sup>242</sup>

Simultaneously, the text also underlines the changed situation that has already occurred. While the question from the people is brought to Samuel (v.12), the decree of amnesty is handed down by Saul (v.13b). This is a narrative strategy to portray the transition of power. Notice that Saul does not assume the honor of victory for himself. Rather, he attributes the success to Yahweh (v.13a) whereas Yahweh seems to play no part in the battle.<sup>243</sup> In this way, Saul witnesses to the fact that he is really chosen by Yahweh and thus Yahweh was with him as he directed the Israelite army to a sound victory over the Ammonites. In a word, the aftermath of the battle shows a magnanimous Saul who deals justly and sympathetically with those who had previously opposed him and who recognizes and affirms his subordination to

<sup>241</sup> Good, *Irony in the Old Testament*, 64. Cf. Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis*, 373.

<sup>242</sup> Alter, *The David Story*, 63. See also McCarter, *I Samuel*, 205.

<sup>243</sup> In general, warfare in the ancient Near East is commonly thought to be the clash of national deities. Victor H. Matthews, *Judges and Ruth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 41-3.

Yahweh.<sup>244</sup> Hence, Saul passes his test of power successfully and goes to Gilgal with all the people to renew the kinship (מְלוּכָה).

Why is it necessary, however, to renew the kingship? Is it possible that the monarchy was in need of renewal? As a matter of fact, the clause in v.14b might be seen as an essential characterization which helps make sense of Saul's triple story. In 10.1, Samuel anointed Saul with no publicly visible consequences but in a clandestine way. Then in 10.21, the tribal assembly took place at Mizpah where Saul was pointed out by lot and proclaimed king though he was reluctant. About a month later,<sup>245</sup> Saul successfully mustered the tribes and defeated the Ammonites. Samuel now calls for a new assembly to renew the kingship, namely to reconfirm Saul's standing as king. In other words, the sequence of events initiated by the misbehavior of Samuel's sons appears to reach a completion since Saul, who was already king *de jure*, has now become king *de facto* and earned the loyalty of all Israel.<sup>246</sup> However, it is worth noting that the Samuel's reaction forms another gap. The men of Israel are happy to have a king, and Saul is happy to be such a king, whereas there is no hint about the attitude of Samuel. This is again the narrator's strategy which shows confidence that the implied reader will pick up the discrepancy and thereby highlight Samuel's conveniently faulty memory. That is to say, although chapter 11 is assigned to be the climax of the narrative, there is something surprising which will be manifested only in the Resolution, namely chapter 12.

#### 4.2.5 Resolution: Samuel's Farewell Speech (1 Samuel 12)

After the Climax in which Saul became king *de facto* and earned the loyalty of

<sup>244</sup> Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, 64.

<sup>245</sup> This reading, "about a month later," is not from MT but LXX. McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 199-200.

<sup>246</sup> McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 205.

all Israel, chapter 12 brings the implied reader back to the theme of Samuel and Yahweh and the מִשְׁפָּט of kingship.<sup>247</sup> At the same time, both negative and positive comments of kingship are pulled together and reconciled to sketch a highly evaluative portrait of Samuel and the people. This kernel feature of the Resolution section of the conflict plot, as Polzin has pointed out, presents an account wherein the superficial narrative contains scarcely any direct word of the narrator but refracts the profoundly ideological voice of the implied author everywhere within it.<sup>248</sup> Polzin borrows the concept from Bakhtin and thereby calls this kind of construction a double-accented or double-styled hybrid construction. In short, the double-styled hybrid construction is an utterance which belongs to a single speaker, but that actually contains a mixture of two utterances. In order to understand the implication of double-accented hybrid constructions, it might be useful to comprehend precisely how the implied author makes an ideological position through a specific literary structure where the explicit voice of the narrator is scarcely heard.

When it comes to the structure of chapter 12, it might be divided into three major stages.<sup>249</sup> To begin with, there is the assessment of Samuel's credentials, namely a Samuel-centered dialogue between prophet and people (vv.1-5). Secondly, there follows the assessment of Israel's present situation, that is, Samuel's prophetic judgment speech and a comment by the narrator (vv.6-18). Finally, there is the assessment of Israel's future; Samuel provides a concluding speech after the people's response (vv.19-25).

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<sup>247</sup> It is not clear whether Samuel's farewell speech takes place at Gilgal following the ceremony of renewing of kingship. But the theme should follow the chapter 11, though Saul's name is never mentioned within the whole chapter. Alter, *The David Story*, 65.

<sup>248</sup> Polzin considers that such an analysis might also be useful for evaluating the plausibility of assuming a heavy-handedly crude redaction lying behind the composition of the Deuteronomistic History in chapter 12. Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 117.

<sup>249</sup> Campbell, *1 Samuel*, 124. Cf. Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 118.

Although the content, in vv.1-5, reflects the issue of Samuel's credentials, the form of double interchange between Samuel and the people actually sets the tone for the entire chapter. When all Israel are assembled and listen to Samuel's speech (v.1), Samuel is portrayed as seizing the opportunity to extort agreement from the people that he is morally blameless. Following the self-defensive opening remarks that he has listened to the Israelites' demand, namely the establishment of kingship, Samuel indirectly insinuates the wrongness of their decision. In the very sentence, "my sons, behold, are with you" (V.2, וַיִּבְנֵי הַנָּחַם אֲחֵיהֶם), he mentions his sons as though they are incidental to the whole matter. Yet according to chapter 8 they clearly are not. Samuel's crooked sons have already disqualified themselves from assuming his mantle. Samuel, however, appears to take a last wistful look at that prospect, that is, in Alter's terminology, "my sons are here among you, but you insist instead on a king."<sup>250</sup> Moreover, in vv.3-5, Samuel's profession of innocence picks up antithetically his admonition against the נִשְׁפָּט of the king in chapter 8 where he warned repeatedly that all the people's treasure possessions would be taken (לָקַח). Nevertheless, the same word, take (לָקַח), is now used here to proclaim that he owns nothing from the people and has never defrauded anyone.<sup>251</sup> Yet the process by which the people immediately confirm his innocence appears to show that they are puppets of the prophet. An illustration given by Polzin exhibits clearly how the narrator has the people respond almost hypnotically to Samuel's protestations of innocence in this matter:<sup>252</sup>

<sup>250</sup> Alter, *The David Story*, 65.

<sup>251</sup> Alter considers that both instances show himself as a master of rhetoric. Alter, *The David Story*, 65.

<sup>252</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 118.

Samuel	The People
3: Whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Whose ox...or whose ass have I taken?	4: You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand.
5a: The Lord is witness against you.	5b: Witness!

Obviously, it is an element of characterization, manifested through dramatic irony—if they have nothing against Samuel why should they have demanded a king? For the implied reader, it is surprising that Samuel attempts to portray himself as a prophet of highest fair, a leader of magnanimous character, since the literary context in which the implied author places these words of Samuel has already remained the implied reader of his self-serving and highly manipulative accents.<sup>253</sup> In other words, the so-called double-voiced nature of Samuel's words convey to the implied reader more than he intends to convey to the people.

Now, Samuel moves into a broader attack, namely the people's history of disloyalty to Yahweh (vv.6-19). Campbell separates the section of Israel's past into three parts: the distant past (vv.7-8), the recent past (vv.9-11), and the immediate past (v.12).<sup>254</sup> The distant past mentions the issues of exodus and conquest which were performed "for you and your ancestors" (אַתֶּם וְאֶת־אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם). Next, the recent past focuses on oppression and deliverance, especially the traditions of the deliverer-judges. It is in verse 12, the immediate past, however, that Samuel's portrayal is markedly different from that of the preceding chapter. Samuel indicates that the threat from Nahash was the trigger initiating the request for a king and the people was the chooser of king. Yet the external implied reader knows, and the

<sup>253</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 119.

<sup>254</sup> Campbell, *1 Samuel*, 125.



internal characters know, that it was Yahweh himself who had made a compromise and had chosen a king, instead of being chosen by the people as is indicated in v.13. That is to say, Samuel in his acute discomfort with the monarchy that has displaced his own authority imputes the choosing of a king to the people.<sup>255</sup> Yahweh for his part, in fact, no more than acquiesces in the people's stubborn insistence on a king. The ambiguity of Samuel's attitude to divine election once again seems to be the main reason resulting in the seeming contradictory narrative.

Moreover, Samuel not only places the guilty weight of promoting kingship solely on the people's shoulders, but also uses the term "your king" (vv.12, 14, מֶלֶךְכֶּם) rather than "our king" to imply the distance between himself and the people. It is significant here to note the phraseological composition which helps the implied reader to figure out the implied authorial ideological perspectives.<sup>256</sup> More precisely, the use of the terminology, "your king" (מֶלֶךְכֶּם), emphasizes Samuel's convenient distortion of what has just been recounted in the previous chapter. On the other hand, the distance that Samuel places between himself and kingship is obviously problematic from the viewpoint of the reality established by the narrative so far. To put it briefly, "everything in Samuel's speech up to this point seems geared toward effecting the people's repentance."<sup>257</sup> Indeed, the miraculous thunder and rain at wheat-harvest time finally bring the people to admit their fault, that is, the "renewal of the kinship" now turns into a collective confession of the sin of having wanted a king.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> Samuel should be regarded as the most impressive figure in Israel, but also the most reluctant. Alter, *The David Story*, 68. As a matter of fact, in this respect, it is still helpful to apply Forster's classic distinction between round and flat characters to analyze the characterization of Saul, Samuel, the people and even Yahweh. That is to say, Samuel, according to this theory, should be regarded as a round character, who exhibits a conglomeration of traits, many of which are even contradictory. E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (London and New York: Harcourt, 1927). See also Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 131-4; Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, 75.

<sup>256</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 120.

<sup>257</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 121.

<sup>258</sup> Gunn points that it is only Saul who remonstrates directly with Yahweh and even then his self-assertion is short-lived. However, in the face of divine anger, for most people that would seem to

Before the theme of Israel's future is discussed (vv.20-25), however, it is worth noting that the decision for kingship has not been required to be revoked even if in the face of the thunder and rain the people confess a sin and ask that they may not die. For this issue, it might be helpful to compare the account with Samuel's earlier prophetic and judicial intervention in behalf of the people in chapter 7.<sup>259</sup> The key point of contrast between chapter 7 and 12 is that the earlier scene in chapter 7 led to Israel's repentance (7.4) whereas in chapter 12 Samuel does not demand what he then demanded (7.1), that is, Samuel never requires that the people put away "this evil, to ask for a king" (v.19).<sup>260</sup> He never considers the cessation of an institution that he promoted while publicly condemning it. In fact, what is remarkable about chapter 12 in the light of chapter 7 is what the implied author does *not* have his narrator and characters say or do. Moreover, as Polzin has indicated, since the people had insisted in chapter 8, "No, but we will have a king over us," why don't they respond to Samuel's appearance with an equally resounding, "No, but we will no longer have a king over us"?<sup>261</sup> Similarly, why does Samuel not announce a ban on kingship directly? No, nothing in the narrative would seem to forbid it. The particular silence here appears to manifest again the ambiguous attitude toward the monarchy.

Hence, vv.20-25 functions as a comment on the prophetic performance of Samuel throughout the crucial events inaugurated by the people's fateful decision in chapter 8 and also as an ideological evaluation of the final scene. To put the matter simply, the demand for kingship seems to be evil and unnecessary, but kingship has become an accepted fact in Israel. More precisely, "everything in these chapters points up the ambiguity of the monarchy even when the ostensible mood is one of

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be a wise response. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, 65.

<sup>259</sup> Cf. McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 218.

<sup>260</sup> It is surprising that no one is convinced that the move to kingship was an absolutely wrong decision and it needed to be revoked. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, 65.

<sup>261</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 123.

approbation of monarchy.”<sup>262</sup> The monarchy indeed emerges out of turbulent and troublesome times (just like the description of the Preliminary Incidents), with Israel torn between hope and fear, apostasy and fidelity. Like several institutions that emerge from troubled times, the monarchy in Israel is indeed heavily loaded with ambivalence.

### 4.3 Conclusion

The aim of chapter 4 has been to comprehend the text’s reproduction of ideology in its rhetoric, by employing an intrinsic analysis of its ideological reading. In light of the theory of conflict plot, which was introduced as a specific narrative strategy to reveal the embedded ideology of the text, the whole narrative, 1 Samuel 8 – 12, was sub divided into several stages for an in-depth investigation of its rhetoric. The finding suggests that the text of 1 Samuel 8 – 12 itself manifests an ambiguous attitude to the monarchy, expressed by means of narrative aesthetics, namely, it is neither pro-kingship nor anti-kingship, nor balanced between the two above-mentioned choices. Such a phenomenon, as indicated in chapter 3, should be seen as the Deuteronomistic attitude to the institution of monarchy. In short, the Deuteronomistic historian left different options open, and had probably no clear position as to the future of monarchy.

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<sup>262</sup> Good, *Irony in the Old Testament*, 66.

# **CHAPTER 5**

## **CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 General Summary**

The first chapter served as a general introduction and provided a preliminary discussion for this thesis. Primarily, a literature review was given in order to survey general statements about the area of our research. It turned out that the dilemma of 1 Samuel 8-12 including the problem of viewpoint and contradictory plot was the main issue of academic debate, and the tendency to settle the problem fell under two categories: (a) diachronic reading and (b) synchronic reading.

In terms of the two readings, the synchronic reading appears to occupy an advantageous position in its interpretive strategy, but the position contribution from a diachronic reading should not be ignored. Moreover, the nature of the problems in the text, 1 Samuel 8-12, is related to ideological issues, which concern not just the production of literary texts, but the historical production of each and every signifier and signified within a society. Hence, ideological reading, which would be able to combine the two models, might be the proper pragmatic methodology, and it necessitates a description of the specific terminology, ideology, and the concept and characteristics of ideological reading in the next chapter.

In chapter 2, ideology and ideological reading respectively was introduced and

discussed. When it comes to the term “ideology,” albeit that Marx viewed it in a specific and pejorative sense, scholars have attempted to rethink its meaning and to expose its meaning in a dynamic way. Broadly speaking, ideology may be described as a complex system of values, ideas, images and perceptions which motivates people to see their particular place in the social order as natural, inevitable, and necessary.

Ideological reading, on the basis of its description, does not focus on the text but on the ideological subtext, namely the assumptions, attitudes, and interests that lie under the statements of the text. To put it another way, ideological reading serves as a reminder that reading is a subjective act done by, to, for, with, or against certain subjects. From a viewpoint of methodology, ideological reading could include a two part analysis: an extrinsic analysis and intrinsic analysis. The former, presented in chapter 3, investigates the social and historical world in which these texts were produced, whereas the latter, presented in chapter 4, pays attention to what the text actually says and how it says it.

In chapter 3, one of the most significant issues facing biblical scholars is the nature of biblical writing in ancient Israel. In the light of recent studies, the task of the ancient storyteller is to interpret historical incidents and thereby construct specific ideologies, which should properly be understood in its own milieu. That is why life under the Neo-Babylonians should be reconstructed by means of a socio-historical approach here.

According to this particular reconstruction, the exilic elite group probably constructed a comprehensive history, the Deuteronomistic History, in order to explain the difficult past. Put differently, Deuteronomistic History might be better viewed as a type of crisis literature, which exhibits the Deuteronomistic perspectives embedded on the text. In view of the analysis of the textual arrangement of 1 Samuel 8-12, the

Deuteronomistic attitude to the institution of monarchy appears to be ambiguous. That is, the Deuteronomists might not have a clear position as to the future of the monarchy at that time.

After completion of the extrinsic analysis, in chapter 4, this study proceeded to the intrinsic analysis, which used conflict plot as a way to understand how the narrative of 1 Samuel 8-12 encoded its ideological production. Conflict plot, which is a specific literary technique, is often regarded as the heart of most stories and may occur at various levels. By investigating the arrangement of tension, suspense, and struggle on the part of the characters, the embedded ideology underlying the text might be manifested.

In light of the theory of conflict plot, therefore, the whole narrative was subdivided into several stages for an in-depth reading of its esthetics. The preliminary incident (8.1-3), which functioned as a summary, implied an unexpected development of plot in the subsequent story. The Occasioning Incident (8.4-22) characterized Samuel's motivation as self-interested, preparing the Lord's performance. The Complication (9-10) started the complex procedure of the establishment of kingship in Israel, disclosing the tensions between several characters. The Climax (11) described a change of identity in Saul, who became king *de facto* and earned the loyalty of all Israel. The final section, the Resolution (12) hinted that the demand for kingship appeared to be evil and unnecessary, but kingship had become an accepted fact in Israel. Taken together, these results suggest that the narrative of 1 Samuel 8-12 manifests an ambiguous attitude to the monarchy by means of elaborate narrative aesthetics.

## 5.2 Review of Research Findings

The present findings contribute to the field's understanding of various forces acting on the interpretation of 1 Samuel 8-12. One such force is the impact of methodological construction. As has been discussed, to deal with the delima of 1 Samuel 8-12 it is better to combine diachronic and synchronic approaches, namely a multiple approach. Ideological reading was for this reason employed as the main methodological construction, allowing entry into the hidden worlds of ideology and the unconscious, namely to find out "who is saying what to whom for what purpose."

Generally speaking, ideological reading is also called "hermeneutics of suspicion," attempting to look beneath the surface since the surface meaning is often no more than a facade hiding the deeper meaning. The reading asks for a systematic suspicion or mistrust regarding anything that may appear to be "given" or self-evident in the text in order to grapple with the hidden world beneath the text. Nevertheless, it does not mean that the reading is necessarily against the text. The reading, rather, attempts to uncover the meaning embedded in the text as a result of the surface shaped by conscious motives for struggle. In that case, the principal target of interpretation is not the text itself but the ideological subtext, namely the speculation, attitudes and interests that are concealed beneath the explicit statements of the text, which could lead to a new view of the surface of the text.

The present research, therefore, combines two different approaches, that is, the socio-scientific approach and the narrative approach, to read the world beneath 1 Samuel 8-12. In terms of the literature review, the date of 1 Samuel 8-12 might accordingly be placed in the exilic period where should be regarded as the point of departure for subsequent research, namely the socio-historical reconstruction of the

situation under the Neo-Babylonians. Compared with historical criticism, socio-historical reconstruction insists that biblical texts are not merely historical ideas or records, but also social and cultural productions, which is more interested in asking questions such as “how?” and “why?” concerning beliefs and experiences in a specific milieu.

By the way of socio-historical reconstruction, the present study understands the Deuteronomistic History as a crisis literature, which attempted to explain the difficult issues happening in 597 and 587 BCE. On the basis of the reconstruction, 1 Samuel 8-12, as an important narrative unit of the Deuteronomistic History, conveys the ambiguous perspective and attitude to the institution of the monarchy in this specific milieu. As a matter of fact, this attitude should be regarded as the “Mandarin” position which reflected a kind of interest of a particular class, namely its ideology.

On the other hand, the literary aspect, which was investigated by the narrative approach, especially the conflict plot, should be involved in the discussion too. Although the previous argument seems to suggest that 1 Samuel 8-12 was written in a specific situation and therefore succeeded in its particular interests at a conscious level, the unconscious level, which often exhibited via the form of aesthetics, should not be ignored. The narrative approach, which entailed the sensitivity to the presentation and development of the story itself, was therefore utilized to determine how the texts incorporated the particular interests.

Several literary writing skills, such as irony, narrative gap, showing, telling, and so on, were involved in the analysis. In terminology of the narrative approach, this kind of reading approach assists the implied reader in figuring out what the implied author attempts to convey including conscious and unconscious levels. Hence, the texts indicate clearly that everything in those chapters points out the ambivalence of



the monarchy, whereas the surface might tell a different story. Stated another way, the text of 1 Samuel 8-12 is ambiguous on the issue of kingship in terms of an socio-rhetorical critical approach.

All in all, this kind of reading approach has gradually gained acceptance though much more has yet to be done. A good example of this is the intrinsic quality of interpretation. From a critical angle, since ideological reading claims that the text cannot be trusted, it might contribute to a powerful attack on biblical studies, especially on unacademic biblical readings. For instance, if the text cannot be trusted, then what or who should be the alternative? If everything is relative to distraction, does the term “interpretation” still make sense? Moreover, how could we value the merit of the biblical text if it is no longer to be trusted? Although the question mentioned above has been discussed in the chapter 2 and 3, in the sections on methodology (2.4) and the biblical account (3.2), it seems to be difficult to convince some of its adequacy. In other words, not only the issue of interpretation and over-interpretation, but also the authority of the Holy Bible must further be noted as ideological reading is employed.

Hence, although the present study has yielded findings that have both theoretical and practical implications, its discussion is not without flaws. Much more needs to be known about the process of biblical interpretation. This study should provide a descriptive basis for additional research. There is a continuing need for an adequate theoretical basis for the practical application of ideological reading.

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